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NOTES ON THE MIRACLES.



# NOTES

ON THE

## MIRACLES OF OUR LORD.

BY

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# PRELIMINARY ESSAY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ON THE NAMES OF THE MIRACLES.

EVERY discussion about a thing will best proceed from an investigation of the name or names which it bears; for the name ever seizes and presents the most distinctive features of the thing, embodying them for us in a word. In the name we have the true declaration of the innermost nature of the thing; we have a witness to that which the universal sense of men, finding its utterance in language, has ever felt thus to lie at its heart; and if we would learn to know the thing, we must start with seeking accurately to know the name which it bears. In the discussion upon which now we are entering, the names are manifold: for it is a consequence of this, that, where we have to do with any thing which in many ways is significant, that will have inevitably many names, since no one will exhaust its meaning. Each of these will embody a portion of its essential qualities, will present it upon a single side; and not from the exclusive contemplation of any one, but only of these altogether, will any adequate apprehension of that which we desire to know be obtained. Thus what we commonly call miracles, are in the Sacred Scriptures termed sometimes "wonders," sometimes "signs," sometimes "powers," sometimes, simply, "works." These titles they have in addition to some others of rarer occurrence, and which easily range themselves under one or other of these;—on each of which I would fain say a few words, before attempting to make any further advance in the subject.

1. To take then first the name "*wonder*,"\* in which the effect of astonishment which the work produces upon the beholder is transferred to the work itself, an effect often graphically portrayed by the Evangelists, when relating our Lord's miracles, (Mark ii. 12; iv. 41; vi. 51; viii. 37; Acts iii. 10, 11,) it will at once be felt that this does but touch the matter on the outside. The ethical meaning of the miracle would be wholly lost, were blank astonishment or gaping wonder *all* which they aroused; since the same effect might be produced by a thousand meaner causes. Indeed, it is not a little remarkable, rather is it singularly characteristic of the miracles of the New Testament, that this name "wonders" is never applied to them but in connection with other names. They are continually "*signs and wonders*," or "*signs*" or "*powers*" alone, but never "*wonders*" alone.† Not that the miracle, considered simply as a wonder, as an astonishing event which the beholders can reduce to no law with which they are acquainted, is even as such without its meaning and its purpose; that purpose being that it should forcibly startle from the mere dream of a sense-bound existence, and, however it may not be itself an appeal to the spiritual in man, should yet be a summons to him that he should open his eyes to the spiritual appeal which is about to be addressed to him.

2. But the miracle, besides being a "*wonder*," is also a "*sign*,"‡

\* *τέρας*. The term *θαύμα*, near akin to *τέρας*, and one of the commonest in the Greek Fathers to designate the miracles, never occurs in the Holy Scripture; *θαυμάσιον* only once; (Matt. xxvi. 15;) but the *θαυμάσιον* is often brought out as a consequence. (Matt. viii. 27; ix. 8, 33; xv. 31, &c.) *Παραδόξον*, which in like manner brings out the unexpectedness of the wonder, and so implies, though it does not express, the astonishment which it causes—a word of frequent usage in ecclesiastical Greek,—is found only Luke v. 26.

† It is not satisfactory that a word, which is thus only the subordinate one in the Greek, should be the chief one in our language to designate these divine facts,—that the two words almost exclusively in use among us, namely wonders and miracles, should bring out only the accidental accompaniment, the astonishment which the work creates, and should go so little into the deeper meaning of the work itself. The Latin *miraculum* (which properly is not a substantive, but the neuter of *miraculus*;) and the German *Wunder* lie exactly under the same defect.

‡ *σημείον*. Our version is not entirely satisfactory from its lack of consistency in rendering this word. There is no reason why *σημείον* should not always have been rendered "sign;" but in the Gospel of St. John, with whom the word is an especial favorite, far oftener than not, "sign" gives place to the vaguer "miracle," and this sometimes not without injury to the entire clearness and force of the words. See for instance, iii. 2; vii. 31; x. 41; and especially vi. 26, where the substitution of "*miracles*" for "*signs*" is greatly injurious to the meaning. Our version makes Christ to say to the multitude, which, after he had once led them in the wilderness, gathered



a token and indication of the near presence and working of God. In this word the ethical end and purpose of the miracle comes out the *most* prominently, as in "wonder" the least. They are signs and pledges of something more than and beyond themselves; (Isai. vii. 11; xxxviii. 7;)\* they are valuable, not so much for what they are, as for what they indicate of the grace and power of the doer, or of the connection in which he stands with a higher world. Oftentimes they are thus seals of power set to the person who accomplishes them, ("the Lord confirming the word by *signs* following," Mark xvi. 20; Acts xiv. 3; Heb. ii. 4;) legitimating acts, by which he claims to be attended to as a messenger from God.† We find the word continually used in senses such as these: Thus, "What *sign* showest thou?" (John ii. 18,) was the question which the Jews asked, when they wanted the Lord to justify the things which he was doing, by showing that he had especial authority to do them. Again they say, "We would see a *sign* from thee;" (Matt. xii. 38;) "Show us a *sign* from heaven." (Matt. xvi.

round him again, "Ye seek me not because ye saw *the miracles*, &c." But rather should it be, "Ye seek me not because ye saw *signs*," (*σημεῖα* without the article,) "not because ye recognized in these works of mine *tokens* and *intimations* of a higher presence, something which led you to conceive great thoughts of me: they are no glimpses of my higher nature, which you have caught, and which bring you here; but you come that you may again be filled." The coming merely because they saw *miracles*, in the strictest sense of the word—works that had made them marvel—the coming with the expectation of seeing such again, would have been as much condemned by our Lord as the coming only for the satisfying of their lowest earthly wants. (Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 1—4.)

\* Basil upon this passage: "Ἔστι σημεῖον πρᾶγμα φανερόν, κεκρυμμένου τινός καὶ ἀφανούς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὴν δῆλωσιν ἔχον. (SICER'S *Theos.*, s. v.) And Lampe is good here (*Comm. in Joh.*, v. 1, p. 513:) Designat sanè σημεῖον naturā suā rem non tantūm extraordinariam, sensusque percipientem, sed etiam talem, quæ in rei alterius, absentis licet et futuræ *significationem* atque *adumbrationem* adhibetur, unde et prognostica (Matth. xvi. 3,) et typi (Matth. xii. 39; Luc. xi. 29,) nec non *sacramenta*, quale est illud circumcisionis, (Rom. iv. 11,) eodem nomina in N. T. exprimi solent. Aptissimè ergo hæc vox de miraculis usurpatur, ut indicet, quod non tantūm admirabili modo fuerint perpetrata, sed etiam sapientissimo consilio Dei ita directa atque ordinata ut fuerint simul *characteres* Massiæ, ex quibus cognoscendus erat, *sigilla* doctrinæ quam proferebat, et beneficiorum gratiæ per Messiam jam præstandæ, nec non *typi* viarum Dei, earumque circumstantiarum per quas talia beneficia erant applicanda.

† The Latin *monstrum*, whether we derive it with Cicero (*De Divin.*, l. 1, c. 42) from *monstro*, or with Festus from *monco*, (*monstrum*=*monestrum*), though commonly used as answering most nearly to *τέρας*, is in truth by either etymology more nearly related to *σημεῖον*. Thus Augustine, who follows Cicero's derivation (*De Civ. Dei.*, l. 21, c. 8): *Monstra* sanè dicta perhibent à *monstrando*, quòd aliquid significando *demonstrant*; et *ostenta* ab *ostendendo*, et *portenta* à *portendendo*, id est *præostendendo*, et *prodigia* quod porrò dicant, id est *future prædicant*.

1.) St. Paul speaks of himself as having "the *signs* of an apostle;" (2 Cor. xii. 12.) in other words, the tokens which should mark him out as such. Thus, too, in the Old Testament, when God sends Moses to deliver Israel he furnishes him with two "signs." He warns him that Pharaoh will require him to legitimate his mission, to produce his credentials that he is indeed God's ambassador, and equips him with the powers which shall justify him as such, which, in other words, shall be his "signs." (Exod. vii. 9, 10.) He "gave a sign" to the prophet whom he sent to protest against the will-worship of Jeroboam. (1 Kin. xiii. 3.)\*

At the same time it may be as well here to observe that the "sign" is not of necessity a miracle, although only as such it has a place in our discussion. Many a common matter, for instance any foretold coincidence or event, may be to a believing mind a sign, a seal set to the truth of a foregoing word. Thus the angels give to the shepherds for "a sign" their finding the child wrapt in the swaddling clothes. (Luke ii. 12.) Sammel gives to Saul three "signs" that God has indeed appointed him king over Israel, and only the last of these is linked with aught supernatural. (1 Sam. x. 1—9.) The prophet gave Eli the death of his two sons as "a sign" that his threatening word should come true. (1 Sam. ii. 34.) God gave to Gideon a sign in the camp of the Midianites of the victory which he should win, (Judg. vii. 9—15.) though it does not happen that the word occurs in that narration.† Or it is possible

\* As is natural, the word sometimes loses its special and higher signification, and is used simply as = *τέρας*. Thus St. Luke xxiii. 8, says of Herod, that he hoped to have seen some "sign" *σημείων* wrought by Christ. The last thing *he* would have desired would have been a sign or indication of a present God; but what he wanted was some glaring feat which should have set him agape—a *τέρας*,—or, more properly yet, a *θαύμα*, in the lowest and meanest sense of the word.

† The words *τέρας* and *σημείων* stand linked together, not merely in the New Testament, but frequently in the Old, Exod. vii. 3, 9; xi. 9; Deut. iv. 34; vi. 22, and often; Neh. ix. 10; Isai. viii. 18; xx. 3; Dan. iii. 32; vi. 27; Ps. lxxxvii. 43; civ. 27; cxxxiv. 9, lxxv. and no less in profane Greek. (*Polyb.*, 3, 10; *Ælian*, l. II, 12, 57; *Orph. Argon.*, 27; *Joseph*, *Antiqq.*, xx. 8, 6.) The distinction between the two, as though the *τέρας* were the *more* wonderful, the *σημείων* the less so,—as though it would be a *σημείων* to heal the sick, a *τέρας* to open the blind eyes, or to raise the dead, (so *Ammonius*, *Cat. in Joh.* iv. 48; *τέρας ἐστὶ τὸ παρὰ φύσιν, οἷον τὸ ἀνοῦξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς πινδαυ καὶ ἐγείραι νεκρὸν σημεῖον δὲ τὸ οὐκ ἔξω τῆς φύσεως, οἷον ἐστιν ἰάσασθαι βηβήσασται*), is quite untenable, however frequently it may occur among the Greek Fathers. See *St. Augustine's Theol.*, s. v. *σημείων*. Rather the same miracle is upon one side a *τέρας* on another a *σημείων*, and the words most often refer not to different classes of miracles, but to different qualities in the same miracles; in the words of Lampe (*Comm. in Joh.*, v. 1, p. 513) *Eadem enim miracula dici possunt signa, quatenus aliquid seu occultum seu futurum docent; et prodigia, (τέρατα) qua-*

for a man, under a strong conviction that the hand of God is leading him, to set such and such a contingent event as a sign to himself, the falling out of which in this way or in that he will accept as an intimation from God of what he would have him to do. Examples of this also are not uncommon in Scripture. (Gen. xxiv. 16; Judg. vi. 36—40; 1 Sam. xiv. 8—13.)

3. Frequently, also, the miracles are styled "*powers*," or "*mighty works*," that is, of God.\* As in the term "wonder" or "miracle," the effect is transferred and gives a name to the cause, so here the cause gives its name to the effect.† The "*power*" dwells originally in the divine Messenger, (Acts vi. 8; x. 38; Rom. xv. 9;) is one with which he is himself equipped of God. Christ is thus in the highest sense that which Simon blasphemously suffered himself to be named, "The great *Power* of God." (Acts viii. 10.) But then by an easy transition the word comes to signify the exertions and separate puttings forth of this power. These are "*powers*" in the plural, although the same word is now translated in our version, "*wonderful works*," (Matt. vii. 22,) and now, "*mighty works*," (Matt. xi. 20; Mark vi. 14; Luke x. 13,) and still more frequently, "*miracles*," (Acts ii. 22; xix. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28; Gal. iii. 5;) in this last case giving sometimes such tautologies as this, "*miracles and wonders*;" (Acts ii. 22; Heb. ii. 4;) and always causing to be lost something of the express force of the word,—how it points to new *powers* which have come into, and are working in, this world of ours.

These three terms, of which we have hitherto sought to unfold the meaning, occur thrice together, (Acts ii. 22; 2 Cor. xii. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 9,) although each time in a different order. They are all, as has already been noted in the case of two of them, rather descriptive of different sides of the same works, than themselves different classes of works.

tenus aliquid extraordinarium, quod stuporem excitat, sistunt. Hinc sequitur signorum notionem latius patere, quàm prodigiorum. Omnia prodigia sunt *signa*, quia in illum usum à Deo dispensata, ut arcanum indicent. Sed omnia *signa* non sunt prodigia, quia ad signandum res cœlestes aliquando etiam res communes adhibentur. Compare 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 31; where at ver. 24 that is called a *σημείον*, which at ver. 31 is a *τέρας* (LXX).

\* *Δυνάμεις* = virtues.

† With this *ἐξουσία* is related, which yet only once occurs to designate a miracle. They are termed *ἐνδοξα*, (Luke xii. 17,) as being works in which the *δόξα* of God came eminently out, (see John ii. 11; xi. 40.) and which in turn caused men to glorify him. (Mark ii. 12.) They are *μεγαλεῖα* = magnalia, (Luke i. 49,) as out-comings of the *greatness* of God's power.

An example of one of our Lord's miracles may show how it may at once be all these. The healing of the paralytic, for example, (Mark ii. 1—12,) was a *wonder*, for they who beheld it "were all *amazed*;" it was a *power*, for the man at Christ's word "arose, took up his bed, and went out before them all;" it was a *sign*, for it gave token that one greater than men deemed was among them; it stood in connection with a higher fact, of which it was the sign and seal, (cf. 1 Kin. xiii. 3; 2 Kin. i. 10;) being wrought that they might "know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins."\*

4. A further term by which St. John very frequently names the miracles is eminently significant. They are very often with him simply "*works*,"† (v. 36; vii. 21; x. 25, 32, 38; xiv. 11, 12; xv. 21; see also Matt. xi. 2.) The wonderful is in his eyes only the natural form of working for him who is dwelt in by all the fulness of God; he must, out of the necessity of his higher being, bring forth these works greater than man's. They are the periphery of that circle whereof he is the centre. The great miracle is the Incarnation; all else, so to speak, follows naturally and of course. It is no wonder that he whose name is "Wonderful" (Isaiah ix. 6,) does works of wonder; the only wonder would be if he did them not.‡ The sun in the heavens is itself a wonder, but not that, being what it is, it rays forth its effluences of light and heat. These miracles are the fruit after its kind, which the divine tree brings forth; and may, with a deep truth, be styled "*works*"§ of Christ, with no further addition or explanation.||

\* Pel's definition (*Comm. in Thess.*, p. 179,) is brief and good: Parva differunt tria ista δυνάμεις, σημεία, τέρατα. Δυνάμεις numeros in generali tamen est vis miraculorum edendorum; σημεία quatenus comprobande inseruiunt doctrinam sive missionem divinam; τέρατα potentia sunt, que admirationem et stuporem excitant.

† The miracles of the Old Testament are called *εργα*, Heb. iii. 9; Ps. xciv. 9, LXX.

‡ Augustine (*In Ev. Joh., Tract. 17*): Mirum non esse debet à Deo factum miraculum. . . . Magis gaudere et admirari debemus quia Dominus noster, et Salvator Jesus Christus homo factus est, quam quod divina inter homines Deus fecit.

§ I am aware that this interpretation of *εργα*, as used by St. John, has sometimes been called in question, and that by this word has been understood the sum total of his nets and his teachings, his words and his works, as they came under the eyes of men, not indeed excluding the miracles, but including also very much besides; yet I cannot doubt that our Lord, using this word, means his miracles, and only them. The one passage brought with any apparent force against this meaning, John xvii. 4, does not really belong to the question. For that *εργον in the singular* may, and here does, signify his whole work and task, is beyond all doubt; but that in the plural the word means his miracles, the following passages, v. 36; x. 25, 32, 38; xiv. 11, to which others might be added, seem to me decisively to prove

|| With regard to the verbs connected with these nouns, we may observe in the

three first Evangelists, *σημεῖα δίδόναι*, (Matt. xii. 39 ; xxiv. 24 ; Mark viii. 12,) and still more frequently *δυνάμεις ποιεῖν*. (Matt. vii. 22 ; xiii. 58 ; Mark ix. 39, &c.) Neither of these phrases occurs in St. John, but *σημεῖα ποιεῖν* continually, (ii. 11 ; iii. 2 ; iv. 54, &c.,) which is altogether wanting in the earlier Evangelists ; occurring, however, in the Acts, (vii. 36 ; xv. 22,) and in Revelations (xiii. 13 ; xix. 20). Once St. John has *σημεῖα δεικνύειν* (ii. 18).

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MIRACLES AND NATURE.

WHEREIN, it may be asked, does the miracle differ from any step in the ordinary course of nature? For that too is wonderful; the fact that it is a marvel of continual recurrence may rob it, subjectively, of our admiration; we may be content to look at it with a dull incurious eye, and to think we find in its constant repetition the explanation of its law, even as we often find in this a reason for excusing ourselves altogether from wonder and reverent admiration;\* yet it does not remain the less a marvel still.

To this question it has been replied by some, that since all is thus marvellous, since the grass growing, the seed springing, the sun rising, are as much the result of powers which we cannot trace or measure, as the water made wine, or the sick healed, or the blind restored to vision, there is therefore no such thing as a miracle eminently so called. We have no right, they say, in the mighty and complex miracle of nature which encircles us on every side, to separate off in this arbitrary manner some certain facts, and to say that this and that are wonders, and all the rest ordinary processes of nature; but that rather we must confine ourselves to one language or the other, and entitle all or nothing miracle.

But this, however at first sight it may seem very deep and true, is indeed most shallow and fallacious. There is quite enough in itself and in its purposes to distinguish that which we name by this name from all with which it is thus attempted to be confounded, and in which to be lost. The distinction indeed which is sometimes made, that in the miracle God is immediately working, and in other events is leaving it to the laws which he has established, to work, cannot at all be admitted: for it has its root in a dead mechanical view of the universe which lies altogether

\* See Augustine, *De Gen. ad Lit.*, l. 12, c. 18; and Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 26 in *Evang.*); *Quotidiana Dei miracula ex assiduitate videntur.*

remote from the truth. The clock-maker makes his clock and leaves it; the ship-builder builds and launches his ship, and others navigate it; but the world is no curious piece of mechanism which its Maker makes and then dismisses from his hands, only from time to time reviewing and repairing it; but as our Lord says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" (John v. 17); he "upholdeth all things by the word of his power."\* (Heb. i. 3.) And to speak of "laws of God," "laws of nature," may become to us a language altogether deceptive, and hiding the deeper reality from our eyes. *Laws of God* exist only for us. It is a *will of God* for himself. That will indeed, being the will of highest wisdom and love, excludes all wilfulness—is a will upon which we can securely count; from the past expressions of it we can presume its future, and so we rightfully call it a law. But still from moment to moment it is a will; each law, as we term it, of nature is only that which we have learned concerning this will in that particular region of its activity. To say then that there is more of the will of God in a miracle than in any other work of his, is insufficient. Such an affirmation grows out of that lifeless scheme of the world, of which we should ever be seeking to rid ourselves, but which such a theory will only help to confirm and to uphold.

For while we deny the conclusion, that since all is wonder, therefore the miracle commonly so called is in no other way than the ordinary processes of nature, the manifestation of the presence and power of God, we must not with this deny the truth which lies in this statement. All *is* wonder; to make a man is at least as great a marvel as to raise a man from the dead. The seed that multiplies in the furrow is as marvellous as the bread that multiplied in Christ's hands. The miracle is not a *greater* manifestation of God's power than those ordinary and ever-repeated processes; but it is a *different*† manifestation. By those other

\* Augustine: Sunt qui arbitrantur tantummodò mundum ipsum factum à Deo; cetera jam fieri ab ipso mundo, sicut ille ordinavit et jussit, Deum autem ipsum nihil operari. Contra quos profertur illa sententia Domini, Pater meus usque adhuc operatur, et ego operor. . . . Neque enim, sicut à structurâ ædium, cùm fabricaverit quis, abscedit; atque illo cessante et absente stat opus ejus; ita mundus vel icu oculi stare poterit, si ei Deus regimen suum subtraxerit. So Melancthon (*In loc. de Creatione*): Infirmas humana etiãms cogitat Deum esse conditorem, tamen postea imaginatur, ut faber discedit à navì exstructâ et relinquit eam nautis; ita Deum discedere à suo opere, et relinqui creaturas tantum propriæ gubernationi; hæc imaginatio magnam caliginem offundit animis et parit dubitationes.

† Augustine (*Serm. 242, c. 1*): In homini carnali tota regula intelligendi est consuetudo eernendi. Quod solent videre credunt: quod non solent, non credunt. . . . Majora quidem miracula sunt, tot quotidie homines nasci qui non erant, quàm paucos resurrexisse qui erant: et tamen ista miracula non consideratione comprehensa sunt, sed assiduitate viluerunt.

God is speaking at all times and to all the world; they are a vast revelation of him. "The invisible things of him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." (Rom. i. 20.) Yet from the very circumstance that nature is thus speaking unto all, that this speaking is diffused over all time, addressed unto all men, from the very vastness and universality of this language, it may miss its aim. It cannot be said to stand in nearer relation to one man than to another, to confirm one man's word more than that of others, to address one man's conscience more than that of every other man. However it may sometimes have, it must often lack, a peculiar and personal significance. But in the miracle wrought in the sight of some certain men, and claiming their special attention, there is a speaking to them in particular. There is then a voice in nature which addresses itself directly to them, a singling of them out from the crowd. It is plain that God has now a peculiar word which they are to give heed to, a message to which he is bidding them to listen.\*

An extraordinary divine causality belongs, then, to the essence of the miracle; more than that ordinary, which we acknowledge in every thing; powers of God other than those which have always been working; such, indeed, as most seldom or never have been working until now. The unresting activity of God, which at other times hides and conceals itself behind the veil of what we term natural laws, does in the miracle unveil itself; it steps out from its concealment, and the hand which works is laid bare. Beside and beyond† the ordinary operations of nature, higher powers, (higher, not as coming from a higher source, but as bearing upon higher ends,) intrude and make themselves felt even at the very springs and sources of her power.

Yet when we say that it is of the very essence of the miracle that it should be thus "a new thing," it is not with this denied that the natural itself may become miraculous *to us* by the way in which it is timed, by

\* All this is brought out in a very instructive discussion on the miracle, which finds place in Augustine's great dogmatic work, *De Trinit.*, l. 3, c. 5, and extends to the chapters upon either side, being the largest statement of his views upon the subject which any where finds place in his works: *Quis attrahit humorem per radicem vitis ad botrum et vinum facit, nisi Deus qui et homine plantante et rigante incrementum dat? Sed cum ad nutum Domini aqua in vinum inusitatâ celeritate conversa est, etiam stultis fatentibus, vis divina declarata est. Quis arbusta fronde et flore vestit solemniter, nisi Deus? Verùm cum floruit virga sacerdotis Aaron, collocata est quodam modo cum dubitante humanitate divinitas. . . . Cum fuit illa continuo quasi quodam iluvio labentium manantique terram, et ex occulto in promptum, atque ex prompto in occultum, usitato itinere transcuntium, naturalia dicuntur: cum vero admonendis hominibus inusitatâ multitudine ingeruntur, miracula nominantur.*

† Not, as we shall see the greatest theologians have always earnestly contended, *contra naturam*, but *præter naturam*, and *supra naturam*.



the ends which it is made to serve. It is indeed true that aught which is perfectly explicable from the course of nature and history, is assuredly no miracle in the most proper sense of the word. Yet still the finger of God may be so plainly discernible in it, there may be in it so remarkable a convergence of many unconnected causes to a single end, it may so meet a crisis in the lives of men, or in the onward march of the kingdom of God, may stand in such noticeable relation with God's great work of redemption, that even while it is plainly deducible from natural causes, while there were such perfectly adequate to produce the effects, we yet may be entirely justified in terming it a miracle, a *providential*, although not an absolute, miracle. Absolute it cannot be called, since there were known causes perfectly capable of bringing it about, and, these existing, it would be superstition to betake ourselves to others, or to seek to break it loose from these. Yet the natural lifts itself up into the miraculous, by the moment at which it falls out, by the purposes which it is made to fulfil. It is a subjective wonder, a wonder *for us*, though not an objective, not a wonder in itself.

Thus many of the plagues of Egypt were the natural plagues of the land,\*—these, it is true, raised into far direr than their usual activity. But in itself it was nothing miraculous that grievous swarms of flies should infest the houses of the Egyptians, or that flights of locusts should spoil their fields, or that a murrain should destroy their cattle. None of these visitations were or are unknown in that land; but the intensity of *all* these plagues, the manner in which they followed hard on one another, their connection with the word of Moses which went before, with Pharaoh's trial which was proceeding, with Israel's deliverance which they helped onward, the manner of their coming and going, all these do entirely justify us in calling them "the signs and wonders of Egypt," even as such is the Scriptural language about them. (Ps. lxxviii. 43; Acts vii. 36.) It is no absolute miracle to find a coin in a fish's mouth, (Matt. xvii. 27,) or that a lion should meet a man and slay him, (1 Kin. xiii. 24,) or that a thunder storm should happen at an unusual period of the year; (1 Sam. xiv. 16—19;) and yet these circumstances may be so timed for strengthening faith, for punishing disobedience, for awakening repentance, they may serve such high purposes in God's moral government, that we at once range them in the catalogue of miracles, without seeking to make an anxious discrimination between the miracle absolute and providential.† Especially

\* See HENGSTENBERG, *Die Bücher Mose's und Aegypten*, pp. 93—129.

† The attempt to exhaust the history of our Lord's life of miracles by the supposition of wonderful fortuitous coincidences is singularly self-defeating. These might do

have they a right to their place among these, when (as in each of the instances alluded to above,) the final event is a sealing of a foregoing word from the Lord; for so, as prophecy, as miracles of his foreknowledge, they claim that place, even if not as miracles of his power. Of course, concerning these more than any other it will be true that they exist only for the religious mind, for the man who believes that God ruleth, and not merely in power, but in wisdom, in righteousness, and in love; for him they will be eminently *signs*, signs of a present working God. In the case of the more absolute miracle it will be sometimes possible to extort from the ungodly, as of old from the magicians of Egypt, the unwilling confession, "This is the finger of God," (Exod. viii. 19;) but in the case of these this will be well nigh impossible; since there is always the natural solution in which they may take refuge, beyond which they will refuse, and beyond which it will be impossible to compel them, to proceed.

But while the miracle is not thus nature, so neither is it *against* nature. That language, however commonly in use, is yet wholly unsatisfactory, which speaks of these wonderful works of God as *violations* of a natural law. *Beyond* nature, *beyond* and *above* the nature which we know, they are, but not contrary to it. Nor let it be said that this distinction is an idle one; so far from being so, Spinoza's whole assault upon the miracles, (not his objections, for they lie much deeper, but his assault,\*) turns upon the advantage which he has known how to take of this faulty statement of the truth, and, that being stated rightly, it becomes at once beside the mark. The miracle is not thus unnatural, nor can it be; since the unnatural, the contrary to order, is of itself the ungodly, and can in no way therefore be affirmed of a divine work such as that with which we have to do. The very idea of the world, as more than one name which it bears testifies, is that of an order; that which comes in then to enable it to realize this idea which it has lost, will scarcely itself be a disorder. So far from this, the true miracle is a higher and a purer nature, coming down out of the world of untroubled harmonies into this world of ours, which so many discords have jarred and disturbed, and bringing this back again, though it be but for

for once or twice; but that such happy chances should on every occasion recur, what is this for one who knows even but a little of the theory of probabilities? not the delivering the history of its marvellous element, but the exchanging one set of marvels for another. If it be said that this was not mere hazard, what manner of person then *must* we conclude him to be, whom nature was always thus at such pains to serve and to seal?

\* *Tract. Theol. Pol.*, c. 6, *De Miraculis*.

one prophetic moment, into harmony with that higher.\* The healing of the sick can in no way be termed against nature, seeing that the sickness which was healed was against the true nature of man—that it is sickness which is abnormal, and not health. The healing is the restoration of the primitive order. We should term the miracle not the infraction of a law, but behold in it the lower law neutralized, and for the time put out of working by a higher; and of this abundant analogous examples are evermore going forward before our eyes. Continually we behold in the world around us lower laws held in restraint by higher, mechanic by dynamic, chemical by vital, physical by moral; yet we say not when the lower thus gives place in favor of the higher, that there was any violation of law,—that any thing contrary to nature came to pass; †—rather we acknowledge the law of a greater freedom swallowing up the law of a lesser. ‡ Thus, when I lift my arm, the law of gravitation is not, as far as my arm is concerned, denied or annihilated; it exists as much as ever, but is held in suspense by the higher law of my will. The chemical laws which would bring about decay in animal substances still subsist, even when they are hemmed in and hindered by the salt which keeps those substances from corruption. The law of

\* Augustine (*Con. Faust.*, l. 56, c. 3): *Contra naturam non incongruè dicimus aliquid Deum facere, quod facit contra id quod novimus in naturā. Hanc enim etiam appellamus naturam, cognitum nobis cursum solitumque naturæ, contra quem cum Deus aliquid facit, magnalia vel mirabilia nominantur. Contra illam verò summam naturæ legem à notitia remotam sive impiorum sive adhuc infirmorum, tam Deus nullo modo facit quàm contra seipsum non facit. Cf. *ibid.*, l. 29, c. 2. The speculations of the great thinkers of the thirteenth century, on the subject of miracles, and especially on this part of the subject, are well brought together by Neander. (*Kirch. Gesch.*, v. 5, pp. 910—925.)*

† See a very interesting discussion upon this subject in AUGUSTINE. (*De Gen. ad Litt.*, l. 6, c. 14—18.)

‡ When Spinoza affirmed that nothing can happen in nature which *opposes* its universal laws, he acutely saw that even then he had not excluded the miracle, and therefore to clench the exclusion, added,—*aut quod ex iisdem [legibus] non sequitur*. But all which experience can teach us is, that these powers which are working in our world will not reach to these effects. Whence dare we to conclude, that because none which we know will bring them about, so none exist which will do so? They exceed the laws of *our* nature, but it does not therefore follow that they exceed the laws of *all* nature. If the animals were capable of a reflective act, man would appear a miracle to them, as the angels do to us, and as the animals would themselves appear to a lower circle of organic life. The comet is a miracle as regards our solar system; that is, it does not own the laws of our system, neither do those laws explain it. Yet is there a higher and wider law of the heavens, whether fully discovered or not, in which its motions are included as surely as those of the planets which stand in immediate relation to our sun.

sin in a regenerate man is held in continual check by the law of the spirit of life ; yet is it in his members still, not indeed working, for a mightier law has stepped in and now holds it in check, but still there, and ready to work, did that higher law cease from its more effectual operation. What in each of these cases is wrought may be against one particular law, that law being contemplated in its isolation, and rent away from the complex of laws, whereof it forms only a part. But no law does stand thus alone, and it is not against, but rather in entire harmony with, the system of laws ; for the law of those laws is, that where powers come into conflict, the weaker shall give place to the stronger, the lower to the higher. In the miracle, this world of ours is drawn into and within a higher order of things ; laws are then at work in the world, which are not the laws of its fallen condition, for they are laws of mightier range and higher perfection ; and as such they claim to make themselves felt, and to have the pre-eminence which is rightly their own.\* To make this clearer I might take a familiar illustration, borrowed from our own church-system of feasts and fasts. It is the rule here that if the festival of the Nativity fall on a day which was designated in the ordinary calendar for a fast, the former shall displace the latter, and the day shall be observed as a festival. Shall we therefore say that the Church has awkwardly contrived two systems which here may, and sometimes do, come into collision with one another ? and not rather admire her more complex law, and note how in the very concurrence of the two, with the displacement of the poorer by the richer, she brings out her idea that holy joy is a higher thing even than holy sorrow, and shall at last swallow it up altogether ? †

\* In remarkable words the writer of the Wisdom of Solomon (xix. 6) describes how at the passage of the Red Sea all nature was in its kind moulded and fashioned again from above (ἡ κτίσις πάλιν ἠνώθεν διετροπέτο) that it might serve God's purposes for the deliverance of his people, and punishment of his enemies.

† Thus Aquinas, whose greatness and depth upon the subject of miracles I well remember once hearing Coleridge exalt, and painfully contrast with the modern theology on the same subject (*Sum Theol.*, pars 1, qu. 105, art. 6:) *A quâlibet causâ derivatur aliquis ordo in suos effectus, cum quâlibet causa habeat rationem principii. Et ideo secundum multiplicationem causarum multiplicentur et ordines, quorum unus continetur sub altero, sicut et causa continetur sub causa. Unde causa superior non continetur sub ordine causâ inferioris, sed e converso. Cujus exemplum apparet in rebus humanis. Nam ex paternitas dependet ordo domûs, qui continetur sub ordine civitatis, qui procedit a civitatis rectore: cum et hic continetur sub ordine regis, a quo totum regnum ordinatur. Si ergo ordo rerum consideretur prout dependet à primâ causâ, sic contra rerum ordinem Deus facere non potest. Si enim sic faceret, faceret *contra* suam presentiam aut voluntatem aut bonitatem. Si vero consideretur rerum ordo, prout dependet à quâlibet secundarum causarum, sic Deus potest facere *proter**

It is with these wonders which have been, exactly as it will be with those wonders which we look for in regard of our own mortal bodies, and this physical universe. We do not speak of these changes which are in store for this and those as violations of law. We should not speak of the resurrection of the body as something contrary to nature, as unnatural; yet no power now working in the world could bring it about; it must be wrought by some power not yet displayed, which God has kept in reserve. So, too, the great change which is in store for the outward world, and out of which it shall issue as a new heaven and a new earth, far exceeds any energies now working in the world, to bring it to pass, (however there may be predispositions for it now, starting points from which it will proceed;) yet it so belongs to the true idea of the world, now so imperfectly realized, that when it does take place, it will be felt to be the truest nature, which only then at length shall have come perfectly to the birth.

The miracles, then, not being against nature, however they may be beside and beyond it, are in no respect slights cast upon its ordinary and every-day workings; but rather, when contemplated aright, are an honoring of these, in the witness which they render to the source from which these also originally proceed. For Christ, healing a sick man with his word, is in fact claiming in this to be the lord and author of all the healing powers which have ever exerted their beneficent influence on the bodies of men, and saying, "I will prove this fact, which you are ever losing sight of, that in me the fountal power which goes forth in a thousand gradual cures resides, by this time only speaking a word, and bringing back a man unto perfect health;"—not thus cutting off those other and more gradual healings from his person, but truly linking them to it.\* So again when he multiplies the bread, when he changes the water into wine, what does he but say, "It is I and no other who, by the sunshine and the shower, by the seed-time and the harvest, give food for the use of man; and you shall learn this, which you are always in danger of unthankfully forgetting, by witnessing for once or for twice, or if not actually witnessing, yet having it rehearsed in your ears for

ordinem rerum; quia ordini secundarum causarum ipse non est subjectus; sed talis ordo ei subicitur, quasi ab eo procedens, non per necessitatem naturæ sed per arbitrium voluntatis; potuisset enim et alium ordinem rerum instituire.

\* Bernard Conner's *Evangelium Medici, seu Medicina Mystica*, London, 1697, awakened some attention at the time of its publication, and drew down many suspicions of infidelity on its author (see the *Biographie Univ.* under his name.) I have not mastered the book, as it seems hardly worth while; but on a slight acquaintance, my impression is that these charges against the author are without any ground. The book bears on this present part of our subject.

ever, how the essences of things are mine, how the bread grows in my hands, how the water, not drawn up into the vine, nor slowly transmuted into the juices of the grape, nor from thence expressed in the vat, but simply at my bidding, changes into wine. You burn incense to your drag, but it is I who, giving you in a moment the draught of fishes which you had yourselves long labored for in vain, will remind you *who* guides them through the ocean paths, and suffers you either to toil long and to take nothing, or crowns your labors with a rich and unexpected harvest of the sea.”—Even the single miracle which wears an aspect of severity, that of the cursed fig-tree, speaks the same language, for in that the same gracious Lord is declaring, “These scourges of mine, wherewith I punish your sins, and summon you to repentance, continually miss their purpose altogether, or need to be repeated again and again, and this mainly because you see in them only the evil accidents of a blind nature; but I will show you that it is I and no other who smite the earth with a curse, who both can and do send these strokes for the punishing of the sins of men.”

And we can quite perceive how all this should have been necessary.\* For if in one sense the orderly workings of nature reveal the glory of God, (Ps. xix. 1—6,) in another they hide that glory from our eyes; if they ought to make us continually to remember him, yet there is danger that they lead us to forget him, until this world around us shall prove—not a translucent medium, through which we look to him, but a thick impenetrable veil, concealing him wholly from our sight. Were there no other purpose in the miracles than this, namely to testify the liberty of God, and to affirm the will of God, which, however it habitually shows itself *in* nature, is yet more than and above nature, were it only to break a link in that chain of cause and effect, which else we should come to regard as itself God, as the iron chain of an inexorable necessity, binding heaven no less than earth, they would serve a great purpose, they would not have been wrought in vain. But there are other purposes than these, and purposes yet more nearly bearing on the salvation of men, to which they serve, and to the consideration of these we have now arrived.†

\* Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps. cx. 4*): [Deus] reservans opportunè inusitata prodigia, quæ infirmitas hominis novitati intenta meminerit, cum sint ejus miracula quotidiana majora. Tot per universam terram arbores creat et nemo miratur; arefecit verbo unam, et stupefacta sunt corda mortalium. . . . Hoc enim miraculum maximè adtentis cordibus inhaerebit, quod assiduitas non vilefecerit.

† J. Müller (*De Mirac. J. C. Nat. et Necess.*, par. I, p. 43): Etiam si nullus alius miraculorum esset usus, nisi ut absolutam illam divinæ voluntatis libertatem demonstrarent, humanamque arrogantiam, immodicæ legis naturalis admirationi junctam, compe-  
pescant, miracula haud temere essent edita.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE AUTHORITY OF THE MIRACLE.

Is the miracle to command absolutely and without further question the obedience of those in whose sight it is done, or to whom it comes as an adequately attested fact, so that the doer and the doctrine, without any more debate, shall be accepted as from God? It cannot be so, for side by side with the miracles which serve for the furthering of the kingdom of God, runs another line of wonders, counterworks of him, who is ever the ape of the Most High, who has still his caricatures of the holiest; and who knows that in no way can he so realize his character of Satan, or the Hinderer, as by offering that which shall either be accepted instead of the true, or, being discovered false, shall bring the true into like discredit with itself. For that it is meant in Scripture to attribute *real* wonders to him there is to me no manner of doubt. They are "*lying* wonders," (2 Thes. ii. 9,) not because in themselves frauds and illusions, but because they are wrought to support the kingdom of lies.\*

Thus I cannot doubt that, according to the intention of Scripture we are meant to understand of the Egyptian magicians, that they stood in relation with a spiritual kingdom as truly as did Moses and Aaron. In-

\* Gerhard (*Loc. Theoll.*, loc. 23, c. 11, § 274): Antichristi miracula dicuntur mendacia, . . . non tam ratione *formæ*, quasi omnia futura sint falsa et adparentia duntaxat, quàm ratione *finis*, quia scilicet ad confirmationem mendacii erunt directa. Chrysostom, who at first explains the passage in the other way, that they are "*lying*" quoad formam, (οὐδὲν ἀληθές ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἀπάτην τὰ πάντα,) yet afterwards suggests the correcter explanation, ἢ διεψευσμένοις, ἢ εἰς ψεῦδος ἄγονσι. Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, l. 20, c. 19,) does not absolutely determine for either, observing that the event must decide. According to Aquinas they will only be *relative* wonders (*Summ. Theol.*, p. 1\*, qu. 114, art. 4): Dæmones possunt facere miracula, quæ scilicet homines mirantur, in quantum eorum facultatem et cognitionem excedunt. Nam et unus homo in quantum facit aliquid quod est supra facultatem et cognitionem alterius, ducit alium in admirationem sui operis, et quodammodo miraculum videatur operari.

deed only so does the conflict between those and these come out in its true significance. It loses the chiefest part of this significance if we think of their wonders as mere conjurers' tricks, dexterous sleights of hand, with which they imposed upon Pharaoh and his servants; making believe, and no more, that their rods turned into serpents, that they also changed water into blood. Rather was this a conflict not merely between the might of Egypt's king and the power of God; but the gods of Egypt, the spiritual powers of wickedness which underlay, and were the soul of, that dark and evil kingdom, were in conflict with the God of Israel. In this conflict, it is true, their nothingness very soon was apparent; but yet most truly the two unseen kingdoms of light and darkness did then in presence of Pharaoh do open battle, each seeking to win the king for itself, and to draw him into its own element.\* Else, unless it had been such a conflict as this, what meaning would such passages have as that in Moses' Song, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?" (Exod. xv. 11;) or that earlier, "Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the Lord?" (Exod. xii. 12; cf. Numb. xxxiii. 4.) As it was *then*, so probably was it again at the Incarnation, for Satan's open encounter of our Lord in the wilderness was but one form of his manifold opposition; and we seem to have a hint of a resistance similar to that of the Egyptian magicians in the withstanding of Paul which is attributed to Elymas. (Acts xiii. 8; cf. 2 Tim. iii. 8.†) But whether then it was so, or not, so will it be certainly at the end of the world. (Matt. xxiv. 24; 2 Thess. ii. 9; Rev. xiii. 13.) Thus it seems that at each great crisis and epoch of the kingdom, the struggle between the light and the darkness, which has ever been going forward, comes out into visible manifestation.

\* The principal argument against this, is the fact that extraordinary feats of exactly like kinds are done by the modern Egyptian charmers; some, which are perfectly inexplicable, are recounted in the great French work upon Egypt, and attested by keen and sharp-sighted observers. But taking into consideration all which we know about these magicians, that they do, and apparently have always, constituted an hereditary guild, that the charmer throws himself into an ecstatic state; the question remains, how far there may not be here a wreck and surviving fragment of a mightier system, how far the charmers do not even now, consciously or unconsciously, bring themselves into relation with those evil powers, which more or less remotely do at the last underlie every form of heathen superstition. On this matter Hengstenberg (*Die Bücher Mose's und Aegypten*, pp. 97—103.) has much of interesting matter.

† Gregory the Great (*Moral.*, l. 34, c. 3) has a curious and interesting passage on the miracles of Antichrist. According to him, one of the great trials of the elect will be, the far more glorious miracles which he shall show, than any which in those last days the Church shall be allowed to accomplish. From the Church signs and wonders will be well nigh or altogether withdrawn, while the greatest and most startling of these will be at his beck.



Yet while the works of Antichrist and his organs are not mere tricks and juggleries, neither are they miracles in the very highest sense of the word; they only partake, in part, of the essential elements of the miracle. This they have, indeed, in common with it, that they are real works of a power which is suffered to extend thus far, and not merely dexterous sleights of hand; but this, also, which is most different, that they are abrupt, isolated, parts of no organic whole; not the highest harmonies, but the deepest discords, of the universe;\* not the omnipotence of God wielding his own world to ends of grace, and wisdom, and love, but evil permitted to intrude into the hidden springs of things just so far as may suffice for its own deeper confusion in the end, and, in the meanwhile, for the needful trial and perfecting of God's saints and servants.†

This fact, however, that the kingdom of lies has its wonders no less than the kingdom of truth, would be alone sufficient to convince us that miracles cannot be appealed to absolutely and simply, in proof of the doctrine which the worker of them proclaims; and God's word expressly declares the same. (Deut. xiii. 1—5.) A miracle does not prove the truth of a doctrine, or the divine mission of him that brings it to pass. That which alone it claims for him at the first is a right to be listened to; it puts him in the alternative of being from heaven or from hell. The doctrine must first commend itself to the conscience as being *good*, and only then can the miracle seal it as *divine*. But the first appeal is from the doctrine to the conscience, to the moral nature in man. For all revelation presupposes in man a power of recognizing the truth when it is shown him,—that it will find an answer in him,—that he will trace in it the lineaments of a friend, though of a friend from whom he has been long estranged, and whom he has well nigh forgotten. It is the finding of a treasure, but of a treasure which he himself and no other had lost. The denial of this, that there is in man any organ by which truth may be recognized, opens the door to the most boundless skepticism, is indeed the denial of all that is godlike in man. But "he that is of God, heareth God's word," and knows it for that which it proclaims itself to be.

It may be objected, indeed, If this be so, if there be this inward witness of the truth, what need then of the miracle? to what does it serve, when the truth has accredited itself already? It has, indeed, accredited itself as good, as *from* God in the sense that all which is good and true is from him, as whatever was precious in the teaching even of heathen sage or poet was from him;—but not as yet as a new word directly from

\* They have the *veritas formæ*, but not the *veritas finis*.

† See AUGUSTINE, *De Trin.*, l. 3, c. 7—9.

him—a new speaking on his part to man. The miracles are to be the credentials for the bearer of that good word, signs that he has a special mission for the realization of the purposes of God in regard of humanity.\* When the truth has found a receptive heart, has awoken deep echoes in the innermost soul of man, he who brings it may thus show that he stands yet nearer to God than others, that he is to be heard not merely as one that is true, but as himself the Truth, (see Matt. xi. 4, 5; John v. 36;) or if not this, as an immediate messenger standing in direct connection with him who is the Truth, (1 Kin. xiii. 3;) claiming unreserved submission, and the reception, upon his authority, of other statements which transcend the mind of man,—mysteries, which though, of course, not *against* that measure and standard of truth which God has given unto every man, yet which cannot be weighed or measured by it.

To ask such a sign from any one who comes professing to be the utterer of a new revelation, the bringer of a direct message from God, to demand this, even when the word already commends itself as in itself good, is no mark of unbelief, but on the contrary is a duty upon his part to whom the message is brought. Else might he lightly be persuaded to receive that as from God, which, indeed, was only the word of man. Thus it was no impiety on the part of Pharaoh to say to Moses and Aaron, “Show a miracle for you,” (Exod. vii. 9, 10,) on the contrary, it was altogether right for him to require this. They came saying they had a message for him from God: it was his duty to put them to the proof. On the other hand, it was a mark of unbelief in Ahaz, (Isai. vii. 10—13,) however he might disguise it, that he would not ask a sign from God in confirmation of the prophet’s word. Had that word been more precious to him, he would not have been satisfied till the seal was set to it; and that he did not care for the seal was a sure evidence that he did not truly care for the promise which with that was to be sealed.

But the purpose of the miracle being, as we have seen, to confirm that which is good, so, upon the other hand, where the mind and conscience witness against the doctrine, not all the miracles in the world have a right to demand submission to the word which they seal.† On the contrary, the great act of faith is to believe, in the face, and in despite, of them all, in what God has revealed to, and implanted in, the soul, of the holy and the true; not to believe another Gospel, though an

\* Gregory the Great (*Hom. 4 in Evang.*): Unde et adjuncta sunt predicationibus sanctis miracula; ut fidem verbis daret virtus ostensa, et nova facerent, qui nova prædicarent.

† As Gregory the Great says well—the Church does not so much deny, as despise the miracles of heretics (*Moral. l. 20, c. 7*): Sancta Ecclesia, etiam si qua fiunt hæreticorum miracula, despicit; quia hæc sanctitatis specimen non esse cognoscit.

angel from heaven, or one transformed into such, should bring it ; (Deut. xiii. 3 ; Gal. i. 8 ;\*) and instead of compelling assent, miracles are then rather warnings to us that we keep aloof, for they tell us that not merely lies are here, for to that the conscience bore witness already, but that he who utters them is more than a common deceiver, is eminently “a liar and an antichrist,” a false prophet,—standing in more immediate connection than other deceived and evil men to the kingdom of darkness, so that Satan has given him his power, (Rev. xiii. 2,) is using him to be an especial organ of his, and to do a signal work for him.†

But in these things, if they are so, there might seem a twofold danger to which the simple and unlearned Christian would be exposed—the danger first of not receiving that which indeed comes from God, or secondly, of receiving that which comes from an evil source. But indeed these dangers do not beset the unlearned and the simple more than they beset and are part of the trial and temptation of every man—the safeguard from either of these fatal errors lying altogether in men’s moral and spiritual, and not at all in their intellectual, condition. They only find the witness which the truth bears to itself to be no witness, they only believe the lying wonders, in whom the moral sense is already perverted ; they have not before received the love of the truth that they might be saved from believing a lie. Thus, then, their believing this lie and rejecting that truth is, in fact, but the final judgment upon them that have had pleasure in unrighteousness. With this view exactly agree the memorable words of St. Paul, (2 Thess. ii. 9—12,) wherein he declares that it is the anterior state of every man which shall decide

\* Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, l. 10, c. 16) : Si tantum hi [angeli] mirabilibus factis humanas permoverent mentes, qui sacrificia sibi expetunt: illi autem qui hoc prohibent, et uni tantum Deo sacrificari jubent, nequaquam ista visibilia miracula facere dignarentur, profecto non sensu corporis, sed ratione mentis præponenda eorum esset auctoritas. So to the Manichæans he says (*Con. Faust*, l. 13, c. 5) : Miracula non facitis ; quæ si faceretis, etiam ipsa in vobis caveremus, præstruente nos Domino, et dicente, Exsurgent multi pseudo-christi et pseudo-prophetæ, et facient signa et prodigia multa.

† Thus Irenæus (*Adv. Har.*, l. 2, c. 31, § 3) calls such deceitful workers, “pre-cursors of the great Dragon,” and speaks exactly this warning, saying, Quos similiter atque illum devitare oportet, et quantum majore phantasmate operari dicuntur, tanto magis observare eos, quasi majorem nequitie spiritum perceperint. And Tertullian, refuting Gnostics, who argued that there was no need that Christ should have been prophesied of beforehand, since he could at once prove his mission by his miracles, [per documenta virtutum,] replies (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 3, c. 3) : At ego negabo solam hanc illi speciem ad testimonium competisse, quam et Ipse postmodum exactoravit. Siquidem edicens multos venturos, et signa facturos, et virtutes magnas edituros, aversionem [eversioem ?] etiam electorum ; nec ideo tamen admittendos, temerariam signorum et virtutum fidem ostendit, ut etiam apud pseudo-christos facillimarum.

whether he shall receive the lying wonders of Antichrist or reject them. (Cf. John v. 43.) For while they come "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" to those whose previous condition has fitted them to embrace them, who have been ripening themselves for this extreme judgment, there is ever something in these wonders, something false, or immoral, or ostentatious, or something merely idle, which detects and lays them bare to a simple faith, and for that at once broadly differences them from those which belong to the kingdom of the truth.\*

These differences have been often brought out. They are immoral; † or if not so, yet futile, without consequences, leading to and ending in nothing. For as the miracle, standing as it does in connection with highest moral ends, must not be itself an immoral act, so may it not be in itself an act merely futile, issuing in vanity and nothingness. This is the argument which Origen continually uses, when he is plied with the alleged miracles of heathen saints and sages. He counts, and rightly, that he has sufficiently shown their emptiness, when he has asked, and obtained no answer to, this question, "What came of these? In what did they issue? Where is the society which has been founded by their help? What is there in the world's history which they have helped forward, to show that they lay deep in the mind and counsel of God? The miracles of Moses issued in a Jewish polity; those of the Lord in a Christian Church; whole nations were knit together through their help. ‡ What have your boasted Apollonius or Esculapius to show as the fruit of theirs? What traces have they left behind them?" § And not

\* "You complain," says Dr. Arnold, in a letter to Dr. Hawkins, (*Life*, v. 2, p. 226,) "of those persons who judge of a revelation not by its evidence, but by its substance. It has always seemed to me that its substance is a most essential part of its evidence; and that miracles wrought in favor of what was foolish or wicked, would only prove Manicheism. We are so perfectly ignorant of the unseen world, that the character of any supernatural power can only be judged by the moral character of the statements which it sanctions. Thus only can we tell whether it be a revelation from God or from the Devil."

† Thus Arnobius (*Adv. Gen.*, l. 1, c. 43) of the heathen wonder-workers: *Quis enim hos nesciat aut imminetia studere prænoscere, quæ necessariò (velint nolint) suis ordinationibus veniunt? aut mortiferam immittere quibus libuerit tabem, aut familiarium dirumpere caritates: aut sine clavibus reserare, quæ clausa sunt; aut ora silentio vincere, aut in curriculum debilitare, incitare, tardare; aut uxoribus et liberis alienis (sive illi mares sint, sive femineî generis) inconcessi amoris flammam et furiales immittere cupiditates?* Cf. IRENEUS, *Adv. Har.*, l. 2, c. 31, § 2, 3.

‡ *Con. Cels.*, l. 2, c. 51: Ἐθνῶν ὄλων συστάτων μετὰ τὰ σημεῖα αὐτῶν.

§ *Con. Cels.*, l. 1, c. 67: Δεικνύτωσαν ἡμῖν Ἕλληνας τῶν κατειλεγμένων τινῶς βιωφελές, λαμπρόν, καὶ παρατεῖναν ἐπὶ τὰς ὑστερον γενεάς. καὶ τηλικούτον ἔργον, ὡς ἐμποεῖν πιθανότητα τῷ περὶ αὐτῶν μύθῳ, λέγοντι ἀπὸ θείας αὐτοὺς γεγονέναι σποράς.

merely, he goes on to say, were Christ's miracles effectual, but effectual for good,—and such good was their distinct purpose and aim; for this is the characteristic distinction between the dealer in false shows of power and the true worker of divine works, that the latter has ever the reformation of men in his eye, and seeks always to forward this; while the first, whose own work is built upon fraud and lies, can have no such purpose of destroying that very kingdom out of which he himself grows.\*

These, too, are marks of the true miracles, and marks very nearly connected with the foregoing, that they are never mere freaks and plays of power, done as in wantonness, and for their own sakes, with no need compelling, for show and ostentation. With good right in that remarkable religious romance of earliest Christian times, *The Recognitions of Clement*† and in the cognate *Clementine Homilies*,‡ Peter is made to draw a contrast between the wonderful works of Christ and those alleged by the followers of Simon Magus to have been wrought by him. What profit, what significance, was there, he asks, in his dogs of brass or stone that barked, his talking statues, his flights through the air, his transformations of himself now into a serpent, now into a goat, his putting on of two faces, his rolling of himself unhurt upon burning coals, and the like?—which even if he had done, the works possessed no meaning; they stood in relation to nothing; they were not, what each true miracle is always more or less, *redemptive* acts; in other words, works not merely of power but of grace, each one an index and a prophecy of the inner work of man's deliverance, which it accompanies and helps forward.§ But, as we should justly expect, it was pre-eminently thus with the miracles of Christ. Each of these is in small, and upon one side or another, a partial and transient realization of the great work which he came that in the end he might accomplish perfectly and for ever. They are all pledges, in that they are themselves first-fruits, of his power; in each of them the word of salvation is incorporated in an act of salvation. Only when regarded in this light do they appear not merely as illustri-

\* *Con. Cels.*, l. 1, c. 68; cf. EUSEBIUS, *Dem. Evang.*, l. 3, c. 6.

† L. 3, c. 6, (*COTELERII Patt. Apostt.*, v. 1, p. 529.)

‡ *Hom.* 2, c. 32—34, (*Ibid.*, p. 629.)

§ L. 3, c. 60 (*COTELERII Patt. Apostt.*, v. 1, p. 529): Nam dic, quæso, quæ utilitas est ostendere statuas ambulantes? latrare æreos aut lapideos canes? salire montes? volare per aerem? et alia his similia, quæ dicitis fecisse Simonem? Quæ autem à Bono sunt, ad hominum salutem, deferuntur; ut sunt illa quæ fecit Dominus noster, qui fecit cæcos videre, fecit surdos audire; debiles et claudos erexit, languores et dæmones effugavit. . . . Ista ergo signa quæ ad salutem hominum prosunt, et aliquid boni hominibus conferunt, Malignus facere non potest. Cf. IRENEUS, *Con. Hær.*, l. 2, c. 32, § 3.

ous examples of his might, but also as glorious manifestations of his holy love.

It is worth while to follow this a little in detail. The evils what are they, which hinder man from reaching the true end and aim of his creation, and from which he needs a redemption? It may briefly be answered that they are sin in its moral and in its physical manifestations. If we regard its moral manifestations, the darkness of the understanding, the wild discords of the spiritual life, none were such fearful examples of its tyranny as the demoniacs; they were special objects, therefore, of the miraculous power of the Lord. Then if we ask ourselves what are the physical manifestations of sin; they are sicknesses of all kinds, fevers, palsies, leprosies, blindness, each of these death beginning, a partial death—and finally, the death absolute of the body. This region therefore is fitly another, as it is the widest region, of his redemptive grace. In the conquering and removing of these evils, he eminently bodied forth the idea of himself as the Redeemer of men. But besides these, sin has its manifestations more purely physical; it reveals itself and its consequences in the tumults and strife of the elements among themselves, as in the rebellion of nature against man; for the destinies of the natural world were linked to the destinies of man, and when he fell, he drew after him his whole inheritance, which became subject to the same vanity as himself. Therefore do we behold the Lord, him in whom the lost was recovered, walking on the stormy waves, or quelling the menace of the sea with his word; incorporating in these acts the deliverance of man from the rebel powers of nature, which had risen up against him, and instead of being his willing servants, were oftentimes now his tyrants and his destroyers. These also were redemptive acts. Even the two or three of his works which seem not to range themselves so readily under any of these heads, yet are not indeed exceptions. For instance, the multiplying of the bread easily shows itself as such. The original curse of sin was the curse of barrenness,—the earth yielding hard-won and scanty returns to the sweat and labor of man; but here this curse is removed, and in its stead the primeval abundance for a moment re-appears. All scantiness and scarceness, such as this lack of bread in the wilderness, such as that failing of the wine at the marriage-feast, belonged not to man as his portion at the first; for all the earth was appointed to serve him, and to pour the fulness of its treasure into his lap. That he ever should hunger or thirst, that he should have need of any thing, was a consequence of Adam's fall—fitly, therefore, removed by him, the second Adam, who came to give back all which had been forfeited by the first.

But the miracle being, then, this ethical act, and only to be received

when it is so, and when it seals doctrines of holiness, the forgetting or failing to bring forward that the divine miracle must, of necessity, move in this sphere of redemption only, that the doctrine also is to try the miracle, as well as the miracle to seal the doctrine, is a most dangerous omission on the part of many who, in modern times, have written so-called "Evidences of Christianity," and have found in the miracles wrought by its Founder, and in those mainly as acts of power, the exclusive argument for its reception as a divine revelation. On the place which these works should take in the array of proofs for the things which we believe there will be occasion, by and by, to speak. For the present it may be sufficient to observe, that if men are taught that they should believe in Christ upon no other grounds than because he attested his claims by works of wonder, and that simply on this score they shall do so, how shall they consistently refuse belief to any other, who shall come attesting his claims by the same? We have here a paving of the way of Antichrist, for as we know that he will have his signs and wonders, so, if this argument is good, he will have right on the score of these to claim the faith and allegiance of men. But no; the miracle must witness for itself, and the doctrine must witness for itself, and then the first is capable of witnessing for the second;\* and those books of Christian evidences are utterly maimed and imperfect, fraught with the most perilous consequences, which reverence in the miracle little else but its power, and see in that alone what gives either to it its attesting worth, or to the doctrine its authority as an adequately attested thing.

\* Gerhard (*Loc. Theoll.*, loc. 23, c. 11): *Miracula sunt doctrinæ tesserae ac sigilla; quemadmodum igitur sigillum à literis avulsum nihil probat, ita quoque miracula sine doctrinâ nihil valent.*

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE EVANGELICAL, COMPARED WITH OTHER CYCLES OF MIRACLES.

#### 1. THE MIRACLES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE miracles of our Lord and those of the Old Testament afford many interesting points of comparison, and of a comparison equally instructive, whether we trace the points of likeness, or of unlikeness, which exist between them. Thus, to note first a remarkable difference, we find oftentimes the holy men of the old covenant bringing, if one may venture so to speak, hardly and with difficulty the wonder-work to the birth; there is sometimes a momentary pause, a seeming uncertainty about the issue; while the miracles of Christ are always accomplished with the highest ease; he speaks and it is done. Thus Moses must plead and struggle with God, "Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee," ere the plague of leprosy is removed from his sister, and not even so can he instantly win the boon; (Num. xii. 13—15;) but Christ heals a leper by his touch, (Matt. viii. 3,) or ten with even less than this, merely by the power of his will and at a distance.\* (Luke xvii. 14.) Elijah must pray long, and his servant go up seven times, before tokens of the rain appear; (1 Kin. xviii. 42—44;) he stretches himself thrice on the child and cries unto the Lord, and painfully wins back its life; (1 Kin. xvii. 21, 22;) and Elisha, with yet more of effort and only after partial failure, (2 Kin. iv. 31—35,) restores the child of the Shunammite to life. Christ, on the other hand, shows himself the Lord of the living and the dead, raising the dead with as much ease as he performed the commonest transactions of life.—In the miracles wrought by men,

\* Cyril of Alexandria, (CRAMER'S *Catena in Luc.* v. 12,) has observed and drawn out the contrast.



glorious acts of faith as they are, for they are ever wrought in reliance on the strength and faithfulness of God, who will follow up and seal his servant's word, it is yet possible for human impatience and human unbelief to break out. Thus Moses, God's organ for the work of power, speaks hastily and acts unbelievably. (Num. xx. 11.) It is needless to say of the Son, that his confidence ever remains the same that his Father heareth him always; that no admixture of even the slightest human infirmity mars the completeness of his work.

Where the miracles are similar in kind, his are larger and freer and more glorious. Elisha feeds a hundred men with twenty loaves, (2 Kin. iv. 42—44,) but he five thousand with five. They have continually their instrument of power to which the wonder-working power is linked. Moses has his rod, his staff of wonder, to divide the Red Sea, and to accomplish his other mighty acts, without which he is nothing, (Exod. vii. 19; viii. 5, 16; ix. 23; x. 13; xiv. 16, &c. ;) his tree to heal the bitter waters; (Exod. xv. 25;) Elijah divides the waters with his mantle; (2 Kin. ii. 8;) Elisha heals the spring with a cruse of salt. (2 Kin. ii. 20.) But Christ accomplishes his miracles simply by the agency of his word, or by a touch, (Matt. xx. 34;) or if he takes any thing as a channel of his healing power, it is from himself he takes it, (Mark vii. 33; viii. 23;\*) or should he, as once he does, use any foreign medium, (John ix. 6,) yet by other miracles of like kind, in which he has recourse to no such extraneous helps, he declares plainly that this was a free choice and not of any necessity. And, which is but another side of the same truth, while their miracles and those of the apostles are ever done in the name of, and with the attribution of the glory to, another, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which *he* will show you," (Exod. xiv. 13,) "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk," (Acts iii. 6,) "Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," (Acts ix. 34; cf. Mark xvi. 17; Luke x. 17; John xiv. 10;) his are ever wrought in his own name and as in his own power: "*I will*, be thou clean," (Matt. viii. 3;) "Thou deaf and dumb spirit, *I*

\* In the East the Mahometans had probably a sense of the fitness of this, namely, that Christ should find all in himself, when they made his healing virtue to have resided in his breath, (Trotter's *Blüthensamml. aus d. Morgenl. Myst.*, p. 62.) to which also they were led as being the purest and least material effluence of the body. (Cf. John xx. 22.) So Agbarus in the apocryphal letter which bears his name, magnifies Christ's healings, in that they were done, *ἄνευ φαρμάκων καὶ βοτανῶν*. Arnobius, too, (*Adv. Gent.*, l. 1, c. 43, 44, 48, 52,) lays great stress upon the point, that all which he did was done *sine ullis adminiculis rerum*; he is comparing, it is true, our Lord's miracles with the lying wonders of the *γοήτες*, not with the only relatively inferior of the Old Testament.

charge thee come out of him;" (Mark ix. 25;) "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." (Luke vii. 14.) Even where he prays, being about to perform one of his mighty works, his disciples shall learn even from his prayer itself that herein he is not asking for a power which he had not indwelling in him, but indeed is only testifying thus to the unbroken oneness of his life with his Father's,\* (John xi. 41, 42;) just as on another occasion he will not suffer his disciples to suppose that it is for any but for their sakes that the testimony from heaven is borne unto him. (John xii. 30.) Thus needful was it for them, thus needful for all, that they should have great and exclusive thoughts of him, and should not class him with any other, even the greatest and holiest of the children of men.

These likenesses and unlikenesses seem equally such as beforehand we should have naturally expected. We should have expected the mighty works of either covenant to be alike, since the old and new form parts of one organic whole; and it is ever God's law that the lower should contain the germs and prophetic intimations of the higher. We should expect them to be unlike, since the very idea of God's kingdom is that of progress, of a gradually fuller communication and larger revelation of himself to men, so that he who in times past spake unto the fathers by the prophets, did at length speak unto us by his Son; and it was only meet that this Son should be clothed with mightier powers than theirs, and powers which he held not from another, but such rather as were his own in fee.†

And this, too, explains a difference in the character of the miracles of the two covenants, and how it comes to pass that those of the old wear oftentimes a far severer aspect than the new. They are miracles, indeed, of God's grace, but yet also miracles of the Law, of that Law which worketh wrath, which will teach, at all costs, the lesson of the awful holiness of God, his hatred of the sinner's sin,—a lesson which men had all need thoroughly to learn, lest they should mistake and abuse the new lesson which a Saviour taught, of God's love at the same time toward the sinner himself. Miracles of the Law, they preserve a character that accords with the Law; being oftentimes fearful out-breaks of God's anger against the unrighteousness of men; such for instance are the signs and wonders in Egypt, many of those in the desert,

\* Cf. AMEROSÉ, *De Fide*, l. 3, c. 4.

† Tertullian, (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 3, passim,) brings this out in a very interesting manner; and Eusebius, (*Dem. Evang.*, l. 3, c. 2,) traces in the same way the parallelisms between the life of Moses and of Christ. They supposed that in so doing they were, if any thing, confirming the truth of either, though now the assailants of Revelation will have it that these coincidences are only calculated to cast suspicion upon both.

(Numb. xvi. 31 ; Lev. x. 2,) and some which the later prophets wrought ; (2 Kin. i. 10—12 ; ii. 23—25 ;) though of these also there are far more which wear a milder aspect ; and are works, as *all* our Lord's are, of evident grace and mercy. I say *all* of our Lord's, for that single one, which seems an exception, the cursing of the barren fig-tree, has no right really to be considered such. Indeed it is difficult to see how our blessed Lord could more strikingly have shown his purpose of preserving throughout for his miracles their character of beneficence, or have witnessed for himself that he was come not to destroy men's lives but to save them, than in this circumstance,—that when he needed in this very love to declare, not in word only but in act, what would be the consequences of an obstinate unfruitfulness and resistance to his grace, and thus to make manifest the severe side of his ministry, he should have chosen for the showing out of this, not one among all the sinners who were about him, but should rather have displayed his power upon a tree, which, itself incapable of feeling, might yet effectually serve as a sign and warning to men. He will not allow even a single exception to the rule of grace and love.\* When he blesses, it is men ; but when he smites, it is an unfeeling tree.† More upon this matter must be deferred till the time comes for treating that miracle in its order.

\* Compare Lord Bacon's excellent remarks, in his *Medit. Sac.*, where on the words, *Benè omnia fecit*, (Mark vii. 35,) in which he sees rightly an allusion to Gen. i. 31, he says: *Verus plausus: Deus cùm universa crearet, vidit quod singula et omnia erant bona nimis. Veus Verbum in miraculis quæ edidit (omne autem miraculum est nova creatio, et non ex lege primæ creationis) nil facere voluit, quod non gratiam et beneficentiam omnino spiraret. Moses edidit miracula, et profligavit Ægyptios pestibus multis: Elias edidit, et oclisit cælum ne plueret super terram ; et rursus eduxit de cælo ignem Dei super duces et cohortes: Eliza-us edidit, et evocavit ursas e deserto, quæ laniarent impuberes ; Petrus Ananiam sacrilegum hypocritam morte, Paulus Elymam magum cæcitate, percussit: sed nihil hujusmodi fecit Jesus. Descendit super eum Spiritus in formâ columbæ, de quo dixit, Nescitis ejus Spiritus sitis. Spiritus Jesu, spiritus columbinus: fuerunt illi servi Dei tanquam boves Dei tritarantes granum, et conculcantes paleam ; sed Jesus agnus Dei sine irâ et judiciis. Omnia ejus miracula circa corpus humanum, et doctrina ejus circa animam humanam. Indiget corpus hominis alimento, defensione ab externis, et curâ. Ille multitudinem piscium in retibus congregavit, ut uberiores victum hominibus præberet: ille alimentum aquæ in dignis alimentum vini ad exhilarandum cor hominis convertit ; ille ficum quod officio suo ad quod destinatum fuit, ad cibum hominis videlicet, non fungeretur, areferi jussit: ille penuriam panum et piscium ad alendum exercitum populi dilatavit: ille ventos, quod navigantibus minarentur, corripuit. . . . Nullum miraculum judicii, omnia beneficentiæ, et circa corpus humanum.*

† It is from this point of view that we should explain our Saviour's rebuke to the sons of Zebèdee, when they wanted to call down fire from heaven on a village of the Samaritans, "*as Elias did*;" (Luke ix. 54 ;) to repeat, that is, an Old Testament

It is also noticeable that the region in which the miracles of the Old Testament chiefly move, is that of external nature; they are the cleaving of the sea, (Exod. xiv. 21,) or of a river, (Josh. iii. 14,) yawnings of the earth, (Num. xvi. 31,) fire falling down from heaven, (2 Kin. i. 10, 12,) furnaces which have lost their power to consume, (Dan. iii.,) wild beasts which have laid aside their inborn fierceness, (Dan. vi.,) and such as these: not of course these exclusively, but this nature is the haunt and main region of the miracle in the Old Testament, as in the New it is mainly the sphere of man's life in which it is at home. And consistently with this, the earlier miracles, done as the greater number of them were, in the presence of the giant powers of heathendom, have oftentimes a colossal character: those powers of the world are strong, but the God of Israel will show himself to be stronger yet. Thus is it with the miracles of Egypt, the miracles of Babylon: they are miracles eminently of strength;\* for under the influence of the great nature-worships of those lands, all religion had assumed a colossal grandeur. Compared with our Lord's works wrought in the days of his flesh, those were the whirlwind and the fire, and his as the still small voice which followed. In that old time God was teaching his people, he was teaching also the nations with whom his people were brought wonderfully into contact, that he who had entered into covenant with one among all the nations, was not one God among many, the God of the hills or the God of the plains, (1 Kin. xx. 23,) but that the God of Israel was the Lord of the whole earth.

But Israel at the time of the Incarnation had thoroughly learned that lesson, much else as it had left unlearned: and the whole civilized world had practically outgrown polytheism, however it may have lingered still as the popular superstition. And thus the works of our Lord, though

miracle. Christ's answer, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," is not, as it is often explained, "Ye are mistaking a spirit of bitter zeal for a spirit of love to me;"—but the rebuke is gentler, "Ye are mistaking and confounding the different standing points of the Old and New Covenant, taking your stand upon the old, that of an avenging righteousness, when you should rejoice to take it upon the new, that of a forgiving love."

\* We find the false Christs who were so plentiful about the time of our Lord's coming, professing and promising to do exactly the same works as those wrought of yore,—to repeat even on a larger scale these Old Testament miracles. Thus "that Egyptian" whom the Roman tribune supposed that he saw in Paul, (Acts xxi. 38,) and of whom Josephus gives us a fuller account, (*Ant.*, l. 20, c. 8, § 6.) led a tumultuous crowd to the Mount of Olives, promising to show them from thence how, as a second and a greater Joshua, he would cause the walls, not of Jericho, but of Jerusalem, to fall to the ground at his bidding. (See Vitringa's interesting Essay, *De Signis à Messia edendis*, in his *Obs. Sac.*, v. 1, p. 482.)

they bear not on their front the imposing character which did those of old, yet contain higher and deeper truths. They are eminently miracles of the Incarnation—of the Son of God, who had taken our flesh, and taking, would heal it. They have predominantly a relation to man's body and his spirit. Miracles of nature take now altogether a subordinate place: they still survive, even as we could have ill afforded wholly to have lost them; for this region of nature must still be claimed as part of Christ's dominion, though not its chiefest or its noblest province. Man, and not nature, is now the main subject of these mighty powers; and thus it comes to pass that, with less of outward pomp, less to startle and amaze, the new have a yet deeper inward significance than the old.\*

## 2. THE MIRACLES OF THE APOCRYPHAL GOSPELS.

The apocryphal gospels, abject productions as, whether contemplated in a literary or moral point of view, they must be allowed to be, are yet instructive in this respect, that they show us what manner of gospels were the result, when men drew from their own fancy, and devised Christs of their own, instead of resting upon the basis of historic fact, and delivering faithfully to the world true records of him who indeed had lived and died among them. Here, as ever, the glory of the true comes out into strongest light by comparison with the false. But in nothing, perhaps, are these apocryphal gospels more worthy of note, than in the difference between the main features of their miracles and those of the canonical Gospels. Thus in the canonical, the miracle is indeed essential, yet, at the same time, ever subordinated to the doctrine which it confirms,—a link in the great chain of God's manifestation of himself to men; its ethical significance never falls into the background, but the act of grace and power has, in every case where this can find room, nearer or remoter reference to the moral condition of the person or persons in whose behalf it is wrought. The miracles ever lead us off from themselves to their Author; they appear as emanations from the glory of the Son of God; but it is in him we rest, and not in them,—they are but the halo round him; having their worth from him, not contrariwise, he from them. They are held, too, together by his strong and central personality, which does not leave them a conglomerate of marvellous anecdotes accidentally heaped together, but parts of a great organic

\* Julian the Apostate had indeed so little an eye for the glory of such works as these, that in one place he says, (CYRILL., *Adv. Jul.*, l. 6.) Jesus did nothing wonderful, "unless any should esteem that to have healed some lame and blind, and exorcised some demoniacs in villages like Bethsaida and Bethany, were very wonderful works."

whole, of which every part is in vital coherence with every other. But it is altogether otherwise in these apocryphal narratives. To say that the miracles occupy in them the foremost place would very inadequately express the facts of the case. They are every thing. Some of these so-called histories are nothing else but a string of these ; which yet (and this too is singularly characteristic) stand wholly disconnected from the ministry of Christ. Not one of them belongs to the period after his Baptism, but they are all miracles of the Infancy,—in other words, of that time whereof the canonical Gospels relate no miracle, and not merely do not relate any, but are remarkably at pains to tell us that during it no miracle was wrought, that in Cana of Galilee being his first. (John ii. 11.)

It follows of necessity that they are never seals of a word and doctrine which has gone before ; they are never “ signs,” but at the best wonders and portents. Any high purpose and aim is clearly altogether absent from them. It is never felt that the writer is writing out of any higher motive than to excite and feed a childish love of the marvellous—never that he could say, “ These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John xx. 31.) Indeed, so far from having a *religious*, they are often wanting in a *moral* element. The Lord Jesus appears in them as a wayward, capricious, passionate child, to be feared indeed, seeing that he is furnished with such formidable powers of avenging every wrong or accidental injury which he meets ; and so bearing himself, that the request which the parents of some other children are represented as making, that he may be kept within the house, for he brings harm and mischief wherever he comes, is perfectly justified by the facts.

It may be well to cite a few examples in proof, however harshly some of them may jar on the Christian ear. Thus some children refuse to play with him, hiding themselves from him ; he pursues and turns them into kids.\* Another child by accident runs against him and throws him down ; whereupon he, being exasperated,† exclaims, “ As thou hast made me to fall, so shalt thou fall and not rise ;” at the same hour the child fell down and expired.‡ He has a dispute with the master who is teaching him letters, concerning the order in which he shall go through the Hebrew alphabet, and his master strikes him ; whereupon

\* *Evang. Infant.*, c. 40, in *TULO'S Cod. Apocr.*, p. 115 ; to whose admirable edition of the apocryphal gospels the references in this section are made throughout.

† *Πικραθεις*.

‡ *Evang. Infant.*, c. 47, p. 123 ; cf. *Evang. Thomæ*, c. 4, p. 234.

Jesus curses him, and straightway his arm is withered, and he falls on his face and dies.\* This goes on, till at length Joseph says to Mary, "Henceforward let us keep him within doors, for whosoever sets himself against him, perishes." His passionate readiness to avenge himself shows itself at the very earliest age. At five years old he has made a pool of water, and is moulding sparrows from the clay. Another child, the son of a scribe, displeased that he should do this on the Sabbath, opens the sluices of his pool and lets out the water. On this Jesus is indignant, gives him many injurious names, and causes him to wither and wholly dry up with his curse.†

Such is the image which the authors of these books give us of the holy child Jesus;—and no wonder; for man is not only unable to realize the perfect, he is unable to conceive it. The idea is as much a gift, as the power to realize that idea. Even the miracles which are not of this revolting character are childish, tricks like the tricks of a conjurer, never solemn acts of power and love. Jesus enters the shop of a dyer, who has various cloths from various persons, to be dyed of divers colors. In the absence of the master, he throws them all into the dyeing vat together, and when the dyer returns and remonstrates, draws them out of the vat each dyed according to the color which was enjoined.‡ He and some other children make birds and animals of clay; while each is boasting the superiority of his work, Jesus says, "I will cause those which I have made to go;"—which they do, the animals leaping and the birds flying, and at his bidding returning, and eating and drinking from his hand.§ While yet an infant at his mother's breast, he bids a palm-tree to stoop that she may pluck the fruits; it obeys, and only returns to its position at his command.|| Another time his mother sends him to the well for water; the pitcher breaks, and he brings the water in his cloak.¶ And as the miracles which he does, so those that are done in regard of him, are idle or monstrous; the ox and ass worshipping him, a new-born infant in the crib, may serve for an example.\*\*

In all these, as will be observed, the idea of redemptive acts altogether falls out of sight; they are none of them the outward clothing of the inward facts of man's redemption. Of course it is not meant to be said that miracles of healing and of grace are *altogether* wanting in

\* *Evang. Infant.*, c. 49, p. 125. In the *Evang. Thom.*, c. 14, p. 307, he only falls into a swoon, and something afterwards pleasing Jesus, (c. 15,) he raises him up again.

† *Evang. Thom.*, c. 3, p. 282. This appears with variations in the *Evang. Infant.*, c. 46, p. 122.

‡ *Evang. Infant.*, c. 37, p. 111.

§ *Ibid.*, c. 36.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 395.

¶ *Evang. Infant.*, p. 121,

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 382.

these books;\* that would evidently have been incompatible with any idea of a Redeemer; but only that they do not present to us any clear and consistent image of a Saviour full of grace and power, but an image rather continually defaced by lines of passion, and caprice, and anger. The most striking, perhaps, of the miracles related in regard of the child Jesus, is that of the falling down of the idols of Egypt at his presence in the land; for it has in it something of a deeper significance, as a symbol and prophecy of the overthrow of the idol worship of the world by him who was now coming into the world.† The lions and the leopards gathering harmlessly round him as he passed through the desert on the way to Egypt, is again not alien to the true spirit of the Gospel, and has its analogy in the words of St. Mark, that he “was with the wild beasts;” (i. 13;) words which certainly are not introduced merely to enhance the savageness of the wilderness where he spent those forty days of temptation, but are meant as a hint to us that in him, the new head of the race, the second Adam, the Paradisaical state was once more given back. (Gen. i. 28.) But with a very few such partial exceptions as these, the apocryphal gospels are a barren and dreary waste of wonders without object or aim; and only instructive as making us strongly to feel, more strongly than but for these examples we might have felt, how needful it is that there should be other factors besides power for producing a true miracle; that wisdom and love must be there also; that where men conceive of power as its chiefest element, they give us only a hateful mockery of the divine. Had a Christ such as these gospels paint actually lived upon the earth, he had been no more than a potent and wayward magician, from whom all men would have shrunk with a natural instinct of distrust and fear.

### 3. THE LATER, OR ECCLESIASTICAL, MIRACLES.

It would plainly lead much too far from the subject in hand to enter into any detailed examination of the authority upon which the later, or, as they may be conveniently termed, the ecclesiastical miracles, come to us. Yet a few words must of necessity find place concerning the permanent miraculous gifts which have been claimed for the Church as her rightful heritage, equally by some who have gloried in their pre-

\* For instance, Simon the Canaanite (*Ibid.*, p. 117,) is healed, while yet a child, of the bite of a serpent. Yet even in miracles such as this, there is always something that will not let us forget that we are moving in another world from that in which the sacred evangelists place us.

† *Evang. Infant.*, c. 10—12, pp. 75—77; cf. 1 Sam. v. 3, 4.



sumed presence, as by others who have lamented their absence—by those alike who have seen in the presence of such, evidences of her sanctity, or in their absence, of her degeneracy and fall. It is not my belief that she has this gift of working miracles, nor yet that she was intended to have, and only through her own unfaithfulness has lost it; nor that her Lord has abridged her of aught that would have made her strong and glorious in not endowing her with powers such as these. With reasons enough for humbling herself, yet I do not believe that among those reasons is to be accounted her inability to perform these works that should transcend nature. So many in our own day have arrived at a directly opposite conclusion, that it will be needful shortly to justify the opinion here expressed.

And first, as a strong presumption against the intended continuance of these powers in the Church, may be taken the analogies derived from the earlier history of God's dealings with his people. We do not find the miracles sown broadcast over the whole Old Testament history, but they all cluster round a very few eminent persons, and have reference to certain great epochs and crises of the kingdom of God. Abraham, the father of the faithful,—David, the great theocratic king,—Daniel, the “man greatly beloved,” are alike entirely without them; that is, they *do* no miracles; such may be accomplished in behalf of them, but they themselves accomplish none. In fact there are but two great outbursts of these; the first, at the establishing of the kingdom under Moses and Joshua, on which occasion it is at once evident that they could not have been wanting; the second in the time of Elijah and Elisha; and then also there was utmost need, when it was a question whether the court religion which the apostate kings of Israel had set up, should not quite overbear the true worship of Jehovah, when the Levitical priesthood was abolished, and the faithful were but a scattered few among the ten tribes. Then, in that decisive epoch of the kingdom's history, the two great prophets, they too in a subordinate sense the beginners of a new period, arose, equipped with powers which should witness that he whose servants *they* were, was the God of Israel, however Israel might refuse to acknowledge *him*. There is here in all this an entire absence of prodigality in the use of miracles; they are ultimate resources, reserved for the great needs of God's kingdom, not its daily incidents; they are not cheap off-hand expedients, which may always be appealed to, but come only into play when nothing else would have supplied their room. How unlike this moderation to the wasteful expenditure of miracles in the church-history of the middle ages! There no perplexity can occur so trifling that a miracle will not be brought in to solve it; there is almost no saint, certainly no distin-

guished one, without his *nimbus* of miracles around his head; they are adorned with these in rivalry with one another, in rivalry with Christ himself; no acknowledgment like this, "John did no miracle," (John x. 41,) in any of the records of their lives finding place.

We must add to this the declarations of Scripture, which I have already entered on at large, concerning the object of miracles, that they are for the confirming the word by signs following, for authenticating a message as being from heaven—that signs are for the unbelieving. (1 Cor. xiv. 22.) What do they then in a Christendom? It may indeed be answered, that in it are unbelievers still; yet not in the sense in which St. Paul uses the word, for he would designate not the positively unbelieving, not those that in heart and will are estranged from the truth, but the negatively, and that, because the truth has never yet sufficiently accredited itself to them. Signs are not for the positively unbelieving, since as we have seen, they will exercise no power over those who harden themselves against the truth; such will resist them as surely as they will resist every other witness of God's presence in the world; but for the unbelieving who are such by no fault of their own—for them to whom the truth is now coming for the first time. And if not even for them now,—as they exist, for instance, in a heathen land,—we may sufficiently account for this by the fact that the Church of Christ, with its immense and evident superiorities of all kinds over every thing with which it is brought in contact, and some portions of which superiority every man must recognize, is itself now the great witness and proof of the truth which it delivers. That truth, therefore, has no longer need to vindicate itself by an appeal to something else; but the position which it has won in the very forefront of the world is itself its vindication now—is sufficient to give it a first claim on every man's attention.

And then further, all that we might ourselves beforehand presume from the analogy of external things leads us to the same conclusions. We find all beginning to be wonderful—to be under laws different from, and higher than, those which regulate ulterior progress. Thus the powers evermore at work for the upholding the natural world are manifestly insufficient for its first creation; there were other which must have presided at its birth, but which now, having done their work, have fallen back, and left it to its ordinary development. The multitudinous races of animals which people this world, and of plants which clothe it, needed infinitely more for their first production than suffices for their present upholding. It is only according to the analogies of that which thus every where surrounds us, to presume that it was even so with the beginnings of the spiritual creation—the Christian Church.

It is unquestionably so in the beginning of that new creation in any single heart. Then, in the regeneration, the strongest tendencies of the old nature are overborne; the impossible has become possible, in some measure easy; by a mighty wonder-stroke of grace the polarity in the man is shifted; the flesh, that was the positive pole, has become the negative, and the spirit, which was before the negative, is henceforth the positive. Shall we count it strange, then, that the coming in of a new order, not into a single heart, but into the entire world—a new order bursting forcibly through the bonds and hindrances of the old, should have been wonderful? It had been inexplicable if it had been otherwise. The son of Joseph might have lived and died and done no miracles: but the Virgin-born, the Son of the Most Highest, himself the middle point of all wonder,—for him to have done none, herein, indeed, had been the most marvellous thing of all.

But this new order, having not only declared but constituted itself, having asserted that it is not of any inevitable necessity bound by the heavy laws of the old, henceforth submits itself in outward things, and for the present time, to those laws. All its true glory, which is its inward glory, it retains; but these powers, which are not the gift—for Christ himself is the gift—but the signs of the gift, it foregoes. They were as the proclamation that the king was mounting his throne; yet the king is not proclaimed every day, but only at his accession: when he sits acknowledged on his throne, the proclamation ceases. They were as the bright clouds which gather round, and announce the sun at his first appearing: his mid-day splendor, though as full, and indeed fuller, of light and heat, knows not those bright heralds of his rising. That it *has had* these wonders—that its first birth was, like that of its wondrous Founder, wonderful—of this the Church preserves a record and attestation in its Scriptures of truth. The miracles recorded there live for the Church; they are as much present witnesses for Christ to us now as to them who actually saw them with their eyes. For they were done once, that they might be believed always—that we, having in the Gospels the living representation of our Lord's life portrayed for us, might as surely believe that he was the ruler of nature, the healer of the body, the Lord of life and of death, as though we had actually ourselves seen him allay a storm, or heal a leper, or raise one dead.

Moreover, a very large proportion of the later miracles presented to our belief bear inward marks of spuriousness. The miracles of Scripture,—and among these, not so much the miracles of the Old Covenant as the miracles of Christ and his apostles, being the miracles of that highest and latest dispensation under which we live—we have a right to consider as normal, in their chief features at least, for all future mira-

cles, if such were to continue in the Church. The details, the local coloring, may be different, and there were no need to be perplexed at such a difference appearing; yet the later must not be, in their inner spirit, totally unlike the earlier, or they carry the sentence of condemnation on their front. They must not, for instance, lead us back under the bondage of the senses, while those other were ever framed to release from that bondage. They must not be aimless and objectless, fantastic freaks of power, while those had every one of them a meaning, and distinct ethical aim—were bridges by which Christ found access from men's bodies to their souls,—manifestations of his glory, that men might be drawn to the glory itself. They must not be ludicrous and grotesque, saintly jests, while those were evermore reverend and solemn and awful. And lastly, they must not be seals and witnesses to aught which the conscience, enlightened by the Word and Spirit of God,—whereunto is the ultimate appeal, and which stands above the miracle, and not beneath it,—protests against as untrue, (the innumerable Romish miracles which attest transubstantiation,) or as error largely mingling with the truth, (the miracles which go to uphold the whole Romish system,) those other having set their seal only to the absolutely true. Miracles such as any of these, we are bound, by all which we hold most sacred, by all which the Word of God has taught us, to reject and to refuse. It is for the reader, tolerably acquainted with the church-history of the middle ages, to judge how many of its miracles will, if these tests be acknowledged and applied, at once fall away, and come no more even into consideration.\*

\* The results are singularly curious, which sometimes are come to through the following up to their first sources the biographies of eminent Romish saints. Tholuck has done so in regard of Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier; and to him (*Ferm. Schrift.*, pp. 50—57,) I am mainly indebted for the materials of the following note.—There are few, perhaps, who have been surrounded with such a halo of wonders as the two great pillars of the order of the Jesuits, Loyola and Xavier. Upwards of two hundred miracles of Loyola were laid before the Pope, when his canonization was in question,—miracles beside which, those of our Lord shrink into insignificance. If Christ by his word and look rebuked and expelled demons, Ignatius did the same by a letter. If Christ walked once upon the sea, Ignatius many times in the air. If Christ, by his shining countenance and glistening garments, once amazed his disciples, Ignatius did it frequently; and, entering into dark chambers, could, by his presence, light them up as with candles. If the sacred history tells of *three* persons whom Christ raised from the dead, the number which Xavier raised exceeds all count. In like manner, the miracles of his great namesake of Assisi rivalled, when they did not leave behind, those of Christ. The author of the *Liber Conformitatum*, writing of him less than a century after his death, brings out these conformities of the Master and the servant: *Illic sicut Jesus aquam in vinum convertit, panes multiplicavit, et de naviculâ*

Very interesting is it to observe how the men who in some sort fell in with the prevailing tendencies of their age, (for, indeed, who escapes them?) yet did ever, in their higher moods, with a truest Christian in-

in medio fluctuum maris miraculosè immotâ, per se à terrâ abductâ, docuit turbas audientes in littore. Huic omnis creatura quasi ad nutum videbatur parere, ac si in ipso esset status innocentiae restitutus. Et ut cætera taceam: cæcos illuminavit; surdos, claudos, paralyticos, omnium infirmitatum generibus laborantes curavit, leprosos mundavit; dæmones effugavit; captivos eripuit; naufragis succurrit, et quàm plures mortuos suscitavit. (GIESELER, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, v. 2, part 2, p. 355.

But to return to Ignatius, and the historic evidence of his miracles. Ribadeneira, from early youth his scholar and companion, published, fifteen years after his death, that is in 1572, a life of his departed master and friend; which book appeared again in 1587, augmented with many additional circumstances communicated by persons who had lived in familiar intercourse with Ignatius while living, and who had most intimate opportunities of being acquainted with all the facts of his life (gravissimi viri et Ignatio valde familiares). Now it is sufficiently remarkable that neither in the first, nor yet in the second so greatly enlarged and corrected edition, does the slightest trace of a miracle appear. On the contrary, the biographer enters into a lengthened discussion of the reasons why it did not please God that any signal miracle should be wrought by this eminent servant of his:—Sed dicat aliquis, si hæc vera sunt, ut profectò sunt, quid causæ est, quam ob rem illius sanctitas minus est testata miraculis, et, ut multorum Sanctorum vita, signis declarata, virtutumque operationibus insignita? Cui ego; Quis cognovit sensum Domini, aut quis conciliaris ejus fuit? Ille enim est qui facit mirabilia magna solus, propterea illius tantummodò infinitâ virtute fieri possunt, quæcumque aut naturæ vim aut modum excedunt. Et ut solus ille hæc potest efficere, ita ille solus novit, quo loco, quo tempore miracula et quorum precibus facienda sint. Sed tamen neque omnes sancti viri miraculis excelluerunt; neque qui illorum aut magnitudine præstiterunt, aut copiâ idcirco reliquos sanctitate superarunt. Non enim sanctitas cujusque signis, sed caritate æstimanda est. Two years before the appearance of the second edition of this work, that is, in 1585, Maffei, styled the Jesuit Livy, published at Rome his work, *De Vita et moribus S. Ignatii Loyolæ Libri tres*; and neither in this is aught related of the great founder of the Order, which deserves the name of a miracle, however there may be here some nearer approach to such than in the earlier biography—remarkable intimations, as of the death or recovery of friends, glimpses of their beatified state, ecstastic visions in which Christ appeared to him; and even of these, the list is introduced in a half apologetic tone, which shows that he has by no means thoroughly convinced himself of the historic accuracy of those things which he is about to relate: Non pauca de eodem admirabilia prædicantur, quorum aliqua nobis hoc loco exponere visum est.

But with miracles infinitely more astounding and more numerous the Romish church has surrounded his great scholar, Francis Xavier. Miracles were as his daily food; to raise the dead was as common as to heal the sick. Even the very boys who served him as catechists received and exercised a similar power of working wonders. Now there are, I believe, no historic documents whatever, laying claim to an ordinary measure of credibility, which profess to vouch for these. And in addition to this, we have a series of letters written by this great apostle to the heathen, out of the midst of his work in the far East, (*S. Francisci Xaverii Epistolarum Libri tres*. Pragæ,

sight, witness against those very tendencies by which they, with the rest of their contemporaries, were more or less borne away. Thus was it with regard to the over-valuing of miracles, the counting them the only evidences of an exalted sanctity. Against this what a continual testimony in all ages of the Church was borne; not, indeed, sufficient to arrest the progress of an error, into which the sense-bound generations of men only too naturally fall, yet showing that the Church herself was ever conscious that the holy life was in the sight of God of higher price than the wonderful works—that love is the greatest miracle of all—that to overcome the world, this is the greatest manifestation of the power of Christ in his servants.\*

One passage from Chrysostom, in place of the many that might be quoted, and even that greatly abridged, must suffice.† He is rebuking the faithful, that now, when their numbers were so large, they did so little to leaven the world, and this, when the apostles, who were but twelve, effected so much; and he puts aside the excuse, “But they had miracles at command,” not with the answer, “So have we;” but in this language: “How long shall we use their miracles as a pretext for our sloth? And what was it then, you say, which made the apostles so great? I answer, This, that they contemned money; that they trampled on vainglory; that they renounced the world. If they had not done thus, but had been slaves of their passions, though they had raised a thousand dead, they would not merely have profited nothing, but would have been counted as impostors. What miracle did John, who reformed so many cities, of whom yet it is expressly said, that he did no sign? And thou, if thou hadst thy choice, to raise the dead in the name of Christ, or thyself to die for his name, which wouldst thou choose? Would it not be plainly the latter? And yet that were a *miracle*, and this is but a *work*. And if one gave thee the choice of turning all grass into gold, or being able to despise all gold as grass, wouldst thou not choose the last? And rightly; for by this last thou wouldst most effectually draw men to the truth. This is not my doctrine, but the blessed Paul’s: for when he had said, ‘Covet earnestly

1750,) letters which prove him indeed to have been one of the discreetest, as he was one of the most fervent, preachers of Christ that ever lived; and which are full of admirable hints for the missionary; but of miracles wrought by himself, of miracles which the missionary may expect in aid of his work, there occurs not a single word.

\* See for instance, Augustine’s admirable treatment of the subject, *Enarr. in Ps. cxxx.*, beginning with the words: “Ergo sunt homines, quos delectat miraculum facere, et ab eis qui profecerunt in Ecclesiâ miraculum exigunt, et ipsi qui quasi profecisse sibi videntur, talia volunt facere, et putant se ad Deum non pertinere, si non fecerint.

† *Hom. 46, in Matth.*

the best gifts,' and then added, 'yet show I unto you a more excellent way;' he did not adduce miracles, but love, as the root of all good things."\*

Few points present greater difficulties than the attempt to fix accurately the moment when these miraculous powers departed from the Church, and it entered into its permanent state, with only its miracles of grace and the records of its miracles of power; instead of having actually going forward in the midst of it those miracles of power as well, with which it first asserted itself in the world. This is difficult, because it is difficult to say at what precise moment the Church was no longer in the act of *becoming*, but contemplated in the mind of God as now actually *being*; when to the wisdom of God it appeared that he had adequately confirmed the word with signs following, and that these props and strengthenings of the infant plant might safely be removed from the hardier tree.†

\* Neander (*Kirch. Gesch.* v. 4, pp. 255–257,) quotes many like utterances coming from the chief teachers of the Church, even in the midst of the darkness of the ninth century. Thus Odo of Clugny, relates of a pious layman, whom some grudged should be set so high, seeing that he wrought no miracles, how that once detecting a thief in the act of robbing him, he not merely dismissed him, but gave him all that which he would wrongfully have taken away, and adds, *Certè mihi videtur, quod id magis admiratione dignum sit, quàm si furem rigere in saxi duritiam fecisset.* And Neander (v. 5, pp. 477, 606,) gives ample testimonies to the same effect from writers of lives of saints, and from others, in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. One of these confesses indeed that it is a long line of miracles which is chiefly looked for from them (*quod maximè nunc exigitur ab iis qui sanctorum vitas describere volunt*). There is a beautiful passage on the superior worth of charity in St. Bernard, *Serm.* 46, c. 8, *in Cant.*

† This image is Chrysostom's, who draws it out at length (*Hom.* 42, *in Inscript. Act. Apostt.*): "As therefore an husbandman, having lately committed a young tree to the bosom of the earth, counts it worthy, being yet tender, of much attention, on every side fencing it round, protecting it with stones and thorns, so that neither it may be torn up by the winds, nor harmed by the cattle, nor injured by any other injury; but when he sees that it is fast rooted and has sprung up on high, he takes away the defences, since the tree can now defend itself from any such wrong; thus has it been in the matter of our faith. When it was newly planted, while it was yet tender, great attention was bestowed on it on every side. But after it was fixed and rooted and sprung up on high, after it had filled all the world, Christ both took away the defences, and for the time to come removed the other strengthenings. Wherefore at the beginning he gave gifts even unto the unworthy, for the early time had need of these helps to faith. But now he gives them not even to the worthy, for the strength of faith no longer needs this assistance." Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 29, *in Evang.*) has very nearly the same image: *Hæc [signa] necessaria in exordio Ecclesiæ fuerunt. Ut enim fides cresceret, miraculis fuerat nutrienda: quia et nos cum arbusta plantamus, tandiu eis aquam infundimus, quousque ea in terrâ jam convaluisse videamus; et si semel radicem fixerint, in rigando cessamus.*

That their retrocession was gradual, that this mighty tide of power should have ebbed only by degrees,\* this was what was to be looked for in that spiritual world which, like God's natural world, is free from all harsh and abrupt transitions, in which each line melts imperceptibly into the next. We can conceive the order of retrocession to have been in this way; that divine power which dwelt in all its fulness and intensity in Christ, was first divided among his apostles, who, therefore, individually brought forth fewer and smaller works than he. It was again from them further subdivided among the ever-multiplying numbers of the Church, who, consequently, possessed not these gifts in the same intensity and plenitude as did the twelve. Yet must it always be remembered that these receding gifts were ever helping to form that which should be their own substitute; that if they were waning, that which was to supply their room was ever waxing,—that they only waned as that other waxed; the flower dropped off only as the fruit was being formed. If those wonders of a first creation have left us, yet this was not so, till they could bequeath in their stead the standing wonder of a Church,† itself a wonder, and embracing manifold wonders in its bosom.‡ For are not the laws of the spiritual world, as they are ever working in the midst of us, a continual wonder? What is the new birth in Baptism, and the communion of Christ's body and blood in the Holy Eucharist, and the life of God in the soul, and a kingdom of heaven in the world, what are these but every one of them wonders?§

\* Thus Origen (*Con. Cels.*, l. 2., c. 46.) calls the surviving gifts in the Church *restiges* (ἵχνη) of former powers; and again l. 2, c. 8, he speaks of them as ἵχνη καὶ τινά γε μείζονα.

† Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, l. 22, c. 8): Quisquis adhuc prodigia, uti credat, inquit, magnum est ipse prodigium, qui mundo credente, non credat.

‡ Coleridge, in his *Literary Remains*, v. 4, p. 260, on this matter expresses himself thus:—"The result of my own meditations is, that the evidence of the Gospel, taken as a total, is as great for the Christians of the nineteenth century as for those of the apostolic age. I should not be startled if I were told it were greater. But it does not follow that this equally holds good of each component part. An evidence of the most cogent clearness, unknown to the primitive Christians, may compensate for the evanescence of some evidence which they enjoyed. Evidences comparatively dim have waxed into noonday splendor, and the comparative wane of others once effulgent, is more than indemnified by the *synopsis τοῦ πᾶντος*, which we enjoy, and by the standing miracle of a Christendom commensurate and almost synonymous with the civilized world."

§ The wonder of the existence and subsistence of a Church in the world is itself so great, that Augustine says strikingly and with a deep truth, that to believe or not to believe the miracles is only choosing an alternative of wonders. If you do not believe the miracles, you must at least believe this miracle, that the world was converted without miracles. (Si miraculis non creditis, saltem huic miraculo credendum est, mundum



wonders in this like the wonders of ordinary nature, as distinguished from those which accompany a new in-coming of power, that they are under a law which we can anticipate; that they conform to an absolute order, the course of which we can understand;—but not therefore the less divine.\* How meanly do we esteem of a Church, of its marvellous gifts, of the powers of the coming world which are working within it, of its Word, of its Sacraments, when it seems to us a small thing that in it men are new-born, raised from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, the eyes of their understanding enlightened, and their ears opened, unless we can also tell of more visible and sensuous wonders. It is as though the heavens should not declare to us the glory of God, nor the firmament show us his handiwork, except at some single moment such as that when the sun was standing still upon Gibeon, and the moon in Ajalon.

sine miraculis fuisse conversum.) Cf. *De Civ. Dei*, l. 22, c. 8. § 1. And on the relation of the helps to faith, the witnesses of God's presence in the midst of us which we have, and which the early Church had, he says (*Serm.* 244, c. 8): Apostoli Christum præsentem videbant: sed toto orbe terrarum diffusam Ecclesiam non videbant: videbant caput et de corpore credebant. Habemus vices nostras: habemus gratiam dispensationis et distributionis nostræ: ad credendum certissimis documentis, tempora nobis in unâ fide sunt distributa. Illi videbant caput, et credebant de corpore: nos videmus corpus, et credamus de capite.

\* Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 29 in *Evang.*): Sancta quippe Ecclesia quotidie spiritaliter facit quod tunc per Apostolos corporaliter faciebat. Nam sacerdotes ejus cum per exorcismi gratiam manum credentibus imponunt, et habitare malignos spiritus in eorum mente contradicunt, quid aliud faciunt, nisi dæmonia ejiciunt? Et fideles quique qui jam vitæ veteris secularia verba derelinquunt, sancta autem mysteria insonant, Conditoris sui laudes et potentiam, quantum prævalent, narrant, quid aliud faciunt nisi novis linguis loquuntur? Qui dum bonis suis exhortationibus malitiam de alienis cordibus auferunt, serpentes tollunt. Et dum pestíferas suasiones audiunt, sed tamen ad operationem pravam minimè pertrahuntur, mortiferum quidem est quod bibunt, sed non eis nocebit. Qui quoties proximos suos in opere bono infirmari conspiciunt, dum eis totâ virtute concurrunt, et exemplo suæ operationis illorum vitam roborant qui in propriâ actione titubant, quid aliud faciunt, nisi super ægros manus imponunt, ut bene habeant? Quæ nimirum miracula tantò majora sunt, quantò spiritalia, tantò majora sunt, quanto per hæc non corpora sed animæ suscitantur. . . . Corporalia illa miracula ostendunt aliquando sanctitatem, non autem faciunt: hæc verò spiritalia, quæ aguntur in mente, virtutem vitæ non ostendunt, sed faciunt. Illa habere et mali possunt; istis autem perfrui nisi boni non possunt. . . . Nolite ergo, fratres carissimi, amare signa quæ possunt cum reprobis haberi communia, sed hæc quæ modò diximus, caritatis atque pietatis miracula amate; quæ tantò securiora sunt quantò et occulta; et de quibus apud Dominum eo major fit retributio, quo apud homines minor est gloria. See too on these greater wonders of the Church AUGUSTINE, *Serm.* 88, c. 3; and ORIGEN (*Con. Cels.* 1, 2, c. 48,) finds in them, in these wonders of grace which are ever going forward, the fulfilment of the promise that those who believed should do greater things than Christ himself. (John xiv. 12.) Cf. BERNARD, *In Ascen. Dom.*, *Serm.* 1.

While then it does not greatly concern us to know *when* this power was withdrawn, what does vitally concern us is, that we suffer not these carnal desires after miracles, as if they were necessarily saints who had them, and they but ordinary Christians who were without them, as though the Church was incomplete and spiritually impoverished which could not show them, to rise up in our hearts, as they are ever ready to rise up in the natural heart of man, to which power is so much dearer than holiness. There is no surer proof than the utterance of feelings such as these, that the true glory of the Church is hidden from our eyes—no sadder sign that some of its outward trappings have caught our fancy ; and not the fact that it is all glorious within, taken possession of our hearts and minds. It is, indeed, ill with us, for it argues little which we ourselves have known of the miracles of grace, when *they* seem to us poor and pale, and only the miracles of power have any attraction in our eyes.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE ASSAULTS ON THE MIRACLES.

#### 1. THE JEWISH.

A RIGID monotheistic religion like the Jewish, left but one way of escape from the authority of miracles, which once were acknowledged to be indeed such, and not mere collusions and sleights of hand. There remained nothing to say but that which we find in the New Testament the adversaries of the Lord continually did say, namely, that these works were works of hell: "This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils."\* (Matt. xii. 24; cf. Mark iii. 22—27; Luke xi. 15—22.) We have our Lord's own answer to the deep malignity of this assertion; his appeal, namely, to the whole tenor of his doctrine and his miracles—whether they were not altogether for the overturning of the kingdom of evil—whether such a lending of power to him on the part of Satan would not be wholly inconceivable, since it were merely and altogether suicidal. For though it would be quite intelligible that Satan should bait his hook with some good, should array himself as an angel of light, and do for a while deeds that might appear as deeds of light, that so he might the better carry through some mighty delusion—

"Win men with honest trifles, to betray them  
In deepest consequence,"

just as Darius was willing that a small portion of his army should perish, that so the mighty deceit which Zopyrus was practising against Babylon might succeed†—yet a lasting, unvarying, unrelaxing assault

\* They regarded him *planum in signis* (TERTULLIAN, *Adv. Marc.*, l. 3, c. 6; cf. *Apolog.*, c. 21). This charge is dressed out with infinite blasphemous additions in the later Jewish books. (See EISENMENGER'S *Entdeckt. Judenth.*, v. 1, p. 148, seq.)

† HERODOTUS, l. 3, c. 155.

on his kingdom is unintelligible as being furthered by himself: his kingdom thus in arms against itself, could not stand, but hath an end. He who came, as all his words and his deeds testified, to destroy the works of the Devil, could not have come armed with *his* power, and helped onward by his aid. It is not a pact with the Evil one which this tells of, but of one mightier than that Evil one having entered with power into his stronghold, and who, having bound him, is now spoiling his goods. Our Lord does in fact repel the accusation, and derive authority to his miracles, not on account of the power which they display, however that may be the first thing that brings them into consideration, but on account of the ethical ends which they serve. He appeals to every man's conscience whether the doctrine to which they bear witness, and which bears witness to them, be not from above and not from beneath: and if so, then the power with which he accomplished them could not have been lent him from beneath, since the kingdom of lies would never so contradict itself as seriously to help forward the establishment of the kingdom of truth.\*

There is indeed at first sight a difficulty in the argument which our Saviour draws from the oneness of the kingdom of Satan—namely, that it seems the very idea of this kingdom, that it should be this anarchy—blind rage and hate not merely against God, but each part of it warring against every other part. And this is most deeply true, that hell is as much in arms against itself as against heaven; neither does our Lord deny that *in respect of itself* that kingdom is infinite contradiction and division: only he asserts that *in relation to the kingdom of goodness* it is at one: there is one life in it and one soul in relation to that. Just as a nation or kingdom may embrace within itself infinite parties, divisions, discords, jealousies, and heart-burnings; yet if it is to subsist as a nation at all, it must not, *as regards other nations*, have lost its sense of unity; when it does so, of necessity it falls to pieces and perishes. To the Pharisees he says: "This kingdom of evil subsists; by your own confession it does so; it cannot therefore have denied the one condition of its existence, which is, that it should not lend its powers to the overthrowing of itself—that it should not side with its own foes; I am its foe, it cannot therefore be siding with me."

This accusation against the miracles of Christ, that they were done by the power of an evil magic, the heathen also sometimes used; but evidently having borrowed it from the Jewish adversaries of the Christian faith.† Yet in their mouths, who had no such earnest idea of the king-

\* Eusebius (*Dem. Evang.*, l. 3, c. 6,) makes much of this argument.

† See a curious passage, Origen, *Con. Cels.*, l. 1, c. 68; cf. also l. 1, c. 6; l. 2, c.

dom of God upon one side, and the kingdom of evil on the other, and the fixed limits which divide the two, who had peopled the intermediate space with middle powers, some good, some evil, some mingled of both, the accusation was not at all so deeply malignant as in the mouth of a Jew. It was little more than a stone which they found conveniently at hand to fling, and with them is continually passing over into the charge that those works were wrought by trick—that they were conjurer's arts; the line between the two charges is continually disappearing. The heathen, however, had a method more truly their own of evading the Christian miracles, which is now to consider.

## 2. THE HEATHEN. (CELSUS, HIEROCLES, PORPHYRY.)

A religion like the Jewish, which, besides God, and the angels who were in direct and immediate subordination to him, left no spirits conceivable but those in rebellion against him, the absolutely and entirely evil, this, as has been observed, allowed no choice, when once the miracle was adjudged to be not from God, but to attribute it to Satan. There was nothing between; it was from heaven, or if not from heaven, from hell. But it was otherwise in the heathen world, and with the "gods many" of polytheism. So long as these lived in the minds of men, the argument from the miracles was easily evaded. For, what did they prove at the uttermost with regard to the author of them? What but that a god, it might be one of the higher, or it might be one of the middle powers, the *δαίμονες*, the intermediate deities, was with him? What was there, men replied, in this, which justified the demand of an absolute obedience upon their parts? Wherefore should they yield exclusive allegiance to him that wrought these works? The gods had spoken often by others also—had equipped them with powers equal to or greater than those claimed by his disciples for Jesus; yet no man therefore demanded for them that they should be recognized as absolute lords

49; l. 8, c. 9; Augustine, *De Cons. Evang.*, l. 1, cc. 9—11; Jerome, *Brev. in Psal.*, 81, in fine; Arnobius, *Adv. Gen.*, l. 1, c. 43, who brings in this as one of the calumnies of the heathen against the Lord: *Magus fuit, clandestinis artibus omnia illa perfecit: Ægyptiorum ex adytis angelorum potentium nomina et remotas furatus est disciplinas; cf. also c. 53.* This charge of fetching his magical skill from Egypt, which Celsus in like manner takes up, (Origen, *Con. Cels.*, l. 1, cc. 28, 38; see also Eusebius, *Dem. Evang.*, l. 3, c. 6.) betrays at once the Jewish origin of the accusation. It is evermore repeated in Jewish books. Egypt, say they, was the natural home of magic, so that if the magic of the world were divided into ten parts, Egypt would possess nine; and there, even as the Christian histories confess, Jesus resided two years. (EISENMENGER'S *Entdeckt. Judenth.*, v. 1, pp. 149, 166.

of the destinies of men. Esculapius performed wonderful cures; Apollonius went about the world healing the sick, expelling demons, raising the dead; Aristæas disappeared from the earth in as marvellous a way as the author of the Christian faith: yet no man built upon these wonders a superstructure such as that which the Christians built upon the wonders of Christ.\*

Thus Celsus, as we learn from more than one passage in Origen's reply, brings forward now the mythic personages of antiquity, now the magicians of a later date, though apparently with no very distinct purpose in his mind, but only with the feeling that somehow or other he can play them off against the divine Author of our religion, and undermine his claims to the allegiance of men. For it certainly remains a question how much credence he gave himself to the miracles which he adduced; † and whether, sharing the almost universal skepticism of the educated classes of his day, he did not rather mean that all should fall, than that all should stand, together. Hierocles, again, governor of Bithynia, who is accused of being a chief instigator of the cruelties under Diocletian, and who, if the charge be just, wielded arms of unrighteousness on both hands against the Christian faith, the persecutor's sword, and the libeller's pen—followed in the same line. His book we know from the extracts in the answer of Eusebius, and the course of his principal arguments. From this answer it appears that, having recounted various miracles wrought, as he affirms, by Apollonius, he proceeds thus: "Yet do we not account him who has done such things for a god, only for a man beloved of the gods: while the Christians on the contrary, on account of a few insignificant wonder-works, proclaim their Jesus for a god." ‡ He presently, it is true, shifts his arguments, and no longer al-

\* The existence of false cycles of miracles should no more cast a suspicion upon all, or cause to doubt those which present themselves with marks of the true, than the appearance of a parhelion forerunning the sun cause us to deny that he was travelling up from beneath the horizon, for which rather it is an evidence. The false money passes, not because there is nothing better and therefore all have consented to receive it, but because there is a good money, under color of which the false is accepted. Thus is it with the longing which has existed "at all times and in all ages after some power which is not circumscribed by the rules of ordinary visible experience, but which is superior to these rules and can transgress them." The mythic narrations in which such longings find an apparently historic clothing and utterance, so far from being eyed with suspicion, should be most welcome to the Christian inquirer. The enemies of the faith will of course parade these shadows, in the hopes of making us believe that our substance is a shadow also; but they are worse than simple who are cozened by so palpable a fraud.

† Origen (*Con. Cels.*, l. 3, c. 22) charges him with not believing them.

‡ In the same way Arnobius (*Adv. Gen.*, l. 1, c. 45) brings in the heathen adver-

lows the miracles, denying only the conclusions drawn from them; but rather denies that they have any credible attestation: in his blind hate, setting them in this respect beneath the miracles of Apollonius, which this "lover of truth,"\* for under that name he writes, declares to be far more worthily attested.

This Apollonius, (of Tyana in Cappadocia,) whose historical existence there does not seem any reason to call in question, was probably born about the time of the birth of Christ, and lived as far as into the reign of Nerva, A.D. 97. Save two or three isolated notices of an earlier date, the only record which we have of him is a Life written by Philostratus, a rhetorician of the second century, professing to be founded on cotemporary documents, yet every where betraying its unhistoric character. It is in fact a philosophic romance, in which the revival and reaction of paganism in the second century is portrayed. Yet was not that Life written, I believe, with any directly hostile purpose against Christianity, but only to prove that they of the old faith had their mighty wonder-worker as well. It was composed indeed, as seems to me perfectly clear, with an eye to the life of our Lord; the parallels are too remarkable to have been the effect of chance; † in a certain sense also in emulation and rivalry; yet not in hostile opposition, not as implying this was the Saviour of men, and not that; nor yet, as some of Lucian's works, in a mocking irony of the things which are written concerning the Lord. ‡ This later use which has often been made of the book, must not be confounded with its original purpose, which was certainly different. The first, I believe, who so used it, was Charles Blount, § one of the earlier English Deists. And passing over some other insignificant endeavors to make the book tell against revealed religion, endeavors in which the feeble hand, however inspired by hate, yet wanted strength

sary saying it is idle to make these claims (*frustra tantum arrogas Christo*,) on the score of the miracles, when so many others have done the like.

\* Philalethes.

† See, for instance, upon the raising of the widow's son, the parallel miracle which I have adduced from the life of Apollonius. The above is Baur's conclusion in his instructive little treatise, *Apollonius von Tyana und Christus*.

‡ His *Philopseudes*, for instance, and his *Vera Historia*. Thus only the latter half of this judgment of Huet's (*Dem. Evang.*, prop. 9, c. 147,) seems to me to be true: *Id spectasse imprimis videtur Philostratus, ut invalescentem jam Christi fidem ac doctrinam deprimeret, opposito hoc omnis doctrinæ, sanctitatis, ac mirificæ virtutis fœneo simulacro. Itaque ad Christi exemplar hanc expressit effigiem, et pleraque ex Christi Jesu historiâ Apollonio accommodavit, ne quid Ethnici Christianis invidere possent.*

§ In his now exceedingly scarce translation, with notes, of *The two first Books of Philostratus*, London, 1680, with this significant motto from Seneca, *Cùm omnia in incerto sint, fave tibi, et crede quod mavis.*

and skill to launch the dart, we come to Wieland's *Agathodæmon*, in which neither malice nor dexterity were wanting, and which, professing to explain upon natural grounds the miracles of Apollonius, yet unquestionably points throughout at one greater than the wonder-worker of Tyana, with a hardly suppressed *de te fabula narratur* running through the whole.\*

The arguments drawn from these parallels, as far as they were adduced in good faith and in earnest, have, of course, perished with the perishing of polytheism from the minds of men, even the minds of those who have not submitted themselves to the faith of Christ. Other miracles can no longer be played off against his miracles; the choice remains between these or none.

### 3. THE PANTHEISTIC. (SPINOZA.)

These two classes of assailants of the Scripture miracles, the Jewish and the heathen, allowed the miracles themselves to stand unquestioned as facts, but either challenged their source, or denied the consequences which were drawn from them by the Church. Not so the pantheistic deniers of the miracles, who assailed them not as being of the devil, not as insufficient proofs of Christ's absolute claims of lordship; but cut at their very root, denying that any miracle was possible, since it was contrary to the idea of God. For these opponents of the truth Spinoza may be said, in modern times, to bear the word; the view is so connected with his name, that it will be well to hear the objection as he has uttered it. That objection is indeed only the necessary consequence of his philosophical system. Now the first temptation on making acquaintance with that system is to contemplate it as a mere and sheer atheism; and such has ever been the ordinary charge against it; nor in studying his works is it always easy to persuade one's self that it is any thing higher, or that the various passages in which he himself assumes it as something different, are more than inconsequent statements, with which he seeks to blind the eyes of others, and to avert the odium of this charge of atheism from himself. And yet atheism it is not, nor is it even a material, how-

\* The work of Philostratus has been used with exactly an opposite aim by Christian apologists, namely, to bring out, by comparison with the best which heathenism could offer, the surpassing glory of Christ. Cudworth, in his *Intellectual System*, b. 4, c. 15, occupies himself at a considerable length with Apollonius. Here may probably have been the motive to Blount's book, which only followed two years after the publication of Cudworth's great work. Henry More, too, in his *Mystery of Godliness*, b. 4, cc. 9—12, compares at large the miracles of Christ with those of Apollonius.



ever it may be a formal, pantheism. All justice requires it to be acknowledged that he does not bring down and resolve God into nature, but rather takes up and loses nature in God. It is only man whom he submits to a blind fate, and for whom he changes, as indeed for him he does, all ethics into physics. But the idea of freedom, as regards God, is saved; since, however, he affirms him immanent in nature and not transcending it, this is only because he has himself chosen these laws of nature as the one unchangeable manner of his working, and constituted them in his wisdom so elastic, that they shall prove under every circumstance and in every need, the *adequate* organs and servants of his will. He is not bound to nature otherwise than by that, his own will; the laws which limit him are of his own imposing; the necessity which binds him to them is not the necessity of any absolute fate, but of the highest fitness. Still, however, Spinoza does affirm such a necessity, and thus excludes the possibility of any revelation, whereof the very essence is that it is a new beginning, a new unfolding by God of himself to man, and especially excludes the miracle, which is itself at once the accompaniment, and itself a constituent part, of a revelation.

It would not be profitable to say here more than a few words on the especial charges which he brings against the miracle, as lowering, and unworthy of, the idea of God. They are but an application to a particular point of the same charges which he brings against all revelation, namely, that to conceive any such is a dishonoring, and a casting a slight upon, God's great original revelation of himself in nature and in man; an arguing that of such imperfection and incompleteness, as that it needed the author of the world's laws to interfere in aid of those laws, lest they should prove utterly inadequate to his purposes.\* And thus, as regards the miracle in particular, he finds fault with it as a bringing in of disorder into that creation, of which the only idea worthy of God is that of an unchangeable order; it is a making God to contradict himself, for the law which was violated by the miracle is as much God's law as the miracle which violated it. The answer to this objection has been already anticipated; it has been already sought to be shown that the miracle is not a discord in nature, but the coming in of a higher harmony; not disorder, but instead of the order of earth, the

\* *Tract. Theol. Pol.*, c. 6: Nam cum virtus et potentia naturæ sit ipsa Dei virtus et potentia, leges autem et regulæ naturæ ipsa Dei decreta, omnino credendum est, potentiam naturæ infinitam esse, ejusque leges adeo latas, ut ad omnia quæ et ab ipso divino intellectu concipiuntur, se extendant; alias enim quid aliud statuitur, quam quod Deus naturam adeo impotentem creaverit, ejusque leges et regulas adeo steriles statuerit, ut sæpe de novo ei subvenire cogatur, si eam conservatam vult, et ut res ex voto succedant, quod sanè à ratione alienissimum esse existimo.

order of heaven ; not the violation of law, but that which continually, even in this natural world, is taking place, the comprehension of a lower by a higher ; in this case the comprehension of a lower natural, by a higher spiritual law ; with only the modifications of the lower, necessarily consequent upon this.

Then, again, when he charges the miracle with resting on a false assumption of the position which man occupies in the universe, as flattering the notion that nature is to serve him, he not to bow to nature, it is most true that it does rest on this assumption. But this were only a charge which would tell *against* it, supposing that true, which so far from being truth, is indeed his first great falsehood of all, namely, the substitution of a God of nature, in place of a God of men. If God be indeed only or chiefly the God of nature, and not in a paramount sense the God of grace, the God of men, if nature be indeed the highest, and man only created as furniture for this planet, it were indeed absurd and inconceivable that the higher should serve, or give place to, or fall into the order of, the lower. But if, upon the other hand, man is the end and object of all, if he be indeed the viceregent of the Highest, the image of God, if this world and all that belongs to it be but a workshop for the training of men, only having a worth and meaning when so considered, then that the lower should serve, and, where need was, give way to the highest, this were only beforehand to be expected.\*

Here, as is so often the case, something much behind the miracle, something much earlier in our view of the relations between God and his creatures, has already determined whether we should accept or reject it, and this, long before we have arrived at the consideration of this specific matter.

#### 4. THE SKEPTICAL. (HUME.)

While Spinoza rested his objection to the miracles on the ground that the everlasting laws of the universe left no room for such, and while the form therefore which the question in debate assumed in his hands was this, Are miracles (objectively) possible ? Hume, a legitimate child and pupil of the empiric philosophy of Locke, started his objection in altogether a different shape, namely, in this, Are miracles (subjectively) credible ? He is in fact the skeptic, which,—taking the word in

\* They are the truly wise, he says, (*Tract. Theol. Pol.*, c. 6.) who aim not at this, *ut natura iis, sed contra ut ipsi naturæ parent, utpote qui certè sciunt, Deum naturam dirigere prout ejus leges universales, non autem prout humanæ naturæ particulares leges exigunt, adeoque Deum non solius humani generis, sed totius naturæ rationem habere.*

its more accurate sense, not as a denier of the truths of Christianity, but a doubter of the possibility of arriving at any absolute truth,—the other is as far as possible from being. To this question his answer is in the negative; or rather, in the true spirit of the philosophy which leaves every thing in uncertainty, It is always more probable that a miracle is false than true; it can therefore in no case prove any thing else, since it is itself incapable of proof,—which thus he proceeds to show. In every case, he observes, of conflicting evidence, we weigh the evidence for and against the alleged facts, and give our faith to that side upon which the evidence preponderates, with an amount of confidence proportioned, not to the whole amount of evidence in its favor, but to the difference which remains after subtracting the evidence against it. Thus, if the evidence on the side of A might be set as = 20, and that on the side of B as = 15, then our faith in A would remain  $20 - 15 = 5$ ; we give our faith upon the side on which a balance of probabilities remains. But every miracle is a case of conflicting evidence. In its favor is the evidence of the attesting witnesses; against it the testimony of all experience which has gone before, and which witnesses for an unbroken order of nature. When we come to balance these against one another, the only case in which the evidence for the miracle could be admitted as prevailing, would be that *in which the falseness or error of the attesting witnesses would be a greater miracle than the miracle which they affirm.* But no such case can occur. The evidence against a miracle having taken place is as complete as can be conceived; even were the evidence in its favor as complete, it would only be proof against proof, and absolute suspension of judgment would be the wise man's part. But further, the evidence in favor of the miracle never makes claim to any such completeness. It is always more likely that the attesting witnesses were deceived, or were willing to deceive, than that the miracle took place. For, however many they may be, they are always but a few compared with the multitudes who attest a fact which excludes their fact, namely, the uninterrupted succession of a natural order in the world, and those few submitted to divers warping influences, from which the others, nature's witnesses, are altogether free. Therefore there is no case in which the evidence for any one miracle is able to outweigh the *à priori* evidence which is against all miracles. Such is the conclusion at which he arrives. The argument, it will be seen, is skeptical throughout. Hume does not, like Spinoza, absolutely deny the miracle, only that we can ever be convinced of one. Of two propositions or assertions that *may be true* which has the least evidence to support it; but according to the necessary constitution of our being, we must give our adherence to that

which presents itself to us with the largest amount of evidence in its favor.

Here again, as on a former occasion, so long as we abide in the region of nature, miraculous and improbable, miraculous and incredible, may be allowed to remain convertible terms. But once lift up the whole discussion into a higher region, once acknowledge aught higher than nature, a kingdom of God, and men the intended denizens of it, and the whole argument loses its strength and the force of its conclusions. Against the argument from experience which tells against the miracle, is to be set, not, as Hume asserts, the evidence of the witnesses, which it is quite true can in no case itself be complete and of itself sufficient, but this, *plus* the anterior probability that God, calling men to live above nature and sense, would in this manner reveal himself as the Lord paramount of nature, the breaker through and sligher of the apparitions of sense; *plus* also the testimony which the particular miracle by its nature, its fitness, the glory of its circumstances, its intimate coherence as a redemptive act with the personality of the doer, in Coleridge's words, "its exact accordance with the ideal of a true miracle is the reason," gives to the conscience that it is a divine work. The *moral* probabilities Hume has altogether overlooked and left out of account, and when they are admitted,—dynamic in the midst of his merely mechanic forces,—they disturb and indeed utterly overbear and destroy them. His argument is as that fabled giant, unconquerable so long as it is permitted to rest upon the earth out of which it sprung; but easily destroyed when once it is lifted into a higher world. It is not, as Hume would fain have us to believe, solely an intellectual question; but it is in fact the moral condition of men which will ultimately determine whether they will believe the Scripture miracles or not;—this, and not the exact balance of argument on the one side or the other, which will cause this scale or that to kick the beam.

He who already counts it likely that God will interfere for the higher welfare of men,—who believes that there is a nobler world-order than that in which we live and move, and that it would be the blessing of blessings for that nobler to intrude into and to make itself felt in the region of this lower, who has found that here in this world we are bound by heavy laws of nature, of sin, of death, which no powers that we now possess can break, yet which must be broken if we are truly to live—he will not find it hard to believe the great miracle, the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, and his declaration as the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead; because all the deepest desires and longings of his heart have yearned after such a deliverer, however little he may have been able even to dream of so glorious a

fulfilment of those longings. And as he believes that greatest miracle, so will he believe all other miracles, which, as satellites of a lesser brightness, naturally wait on and cluster round and draw their lustre from the central brightness of that one. He, upon the other hand, to whom this world is all, who has lost all sense of a higher world with which it must once have stood connected, who is disturbed with no longings for aught nobler than it gives, to whom "the kingdom of God" is an unintelligible phrase, he will resist, by an intellectual theory if he can, or if not by that, by instinct, the miracle. Every thing that is in him predisposes him to disbelieve it, and the doctrines which it seals. To him who denies thus any final causes, who does not believe that humanity is being carried forward under a mightier leading than its own to a certain and that a glorious end, to whom the history of the world and of man is but the history of a bark, storm-tost long, and to be wrecked at last, these moral probabilities are no probabilities; and this being so, we should learn betimes how futile it is to argue with men about *our* faith, who are the deniers of all upon which *any* faith can be built.\*

##### 5. THE MIRACLES ONLY RELATIVELY MIRACULOUS. (SCHLEIERMACHER.)

Another way of getting rid of the miraculous element in the miracle, and one often united with Spinoza's *à priori* argument against it,† explaining the phenomenon of an apparent miracle after that has shown that a real one was impossible, has been the following. These works it has been said were *relative* miracles,—miracles, in other words, for those in regard of whom they were first done,—as when a savage believes that a telescope has the power of bringing the far instantaneously near,—but no miracles in themselves, being but in truth the anticipation of discoveries in the kingdom of nature, the works of one who had penetrated deeper into her mysteries than the men of his own age, and therefore could wield powers which were unknown, and bring about results which were inexplicable to them.‡ It must be evident to the least thoughtful, that however the fact may be sought to be disguised, the miracle does

\* Augustine (*De Util. Cred.*, c. 16): Si enim Dei providentia non præsidet rebus humanis, nihil est de religione satagendum. See some valuable remarks on Hume and on his position in Mill's *Logic*, v. 2, p. 187, 2nd edit.

† As by Spinoza himself, *Ep.* 23: Rogare mihi liceat an nos homunciones tantam naturæ cognitionem habeamus, ut determinare possimus, quousque ejus vis et potentia se extendit, et quid ejus vim superat?

‡ Thus Hase (*Leben Jesu*, p. 108): Sie sind zwar nothwendig begriffen im Naturzusammenhänge, daher nach diesem überall zu forschen ist, aber sie überschritten weit die Kenntniss und Craft der Zeitgenossen.

thus become no miracle,\* and the doer of it can no longer be recognized as one commanding nature in a way specifically different from other men, but only as one who has a clearer or earlier insight than others into her laws and the springs of her power. It is strange that any should ever have been satisfied with this statement, which is indeed only a decently veiled denial of the miracle altogether.† For thus it has no longer an eternal significance; it is no longer a halo which is to surround the head of its worker for ever; with each enlargement of men's knowledge of nature a star in his crown of glory is extinguished, till at length it fades altogether into the light of common day—nay, rather declares that it was never any more than a deceitful and meteor fire. For it implies a serious moral charge against the doer of these works, if he vents them as wonders, as acts of a higher power than nature's, or allows others so to receive them, when indeed they are wrought but according to her ordinary laws. It was well enough, according to the spirit in which he was working, for one of the conquerors of the New World to make the Indians, whom he wished to terrify, believe that in his displeasure with them he would at a certain hour darken the moon, when indeed he was but foreknowing an eclipse of that orb: but in the kingdom of truth to use artifices like these were but by lies to seek to overturn the kingdom of lies.‡

Schleiermacher§ endeavors so to guard this view that it shall not

\* Mirabile, but not miraculum. Augustine's definition in one place, (*De Util. Cred.*, c. 16.) *Miraculum voco quicquid arduum aut insolitum supra spem vel facultatem mirantis apparet*, is plainly faulty; it is the definition of the mirabile, not of the miraculum: Aquinas is more distinct (*Summ. Theol.*, l. 1. qu. 110, art. 4): *Non sufficit ad rationem miraculi, si aliquid fiat præter ordinem alicujus naturæ particularis, sic enim aliquis miraculum faceret lapidem sursum projiciendo; ex hoc autem aliquid dicitur miraculum, quod fit præter ordinem totius naturæ creatæ, quo sensu solus Deus facit miracula. Nobis enim non omnis virtus naturæ creatæ nota; cum ergo fit aliquid præter ordinem naturæ creatæ nobis notæ per virtutem creatam nobis ignotam, est quidem miraculum quoad nos, sed non simpliciter.*

† J. Müller (*De Mirac. J. C. Nat. et Necess.*, par. 2, p. 1.) well characterizes this scheme: *Quid verò? num de miraculorum necessitate ordiamur à notione miraculi tollendâ? Si enim ex eâ sententiâ mirabilia Christi opera e propriis naturæ viribus secundum hujus legem, at absconditum, orta sunt, certum et constans discrimen hæc inter et illa, quæ quotidie in naturâ fieri videmur, remanet nullum; omnia fluunt et miscentur; quæ rerum natura heri gremio suo operuit, aperit hodie; quæ etiam nunc abscondita sunt, posthac patebunt. Si verò, quod hodie miraculum, eras non erit, et hodie non est, sed esse tantum videtur.*

‡ Plutarch (*De Def. Orac.*, c. 12) mentions exactly the same trick of a Thessalian sorceress. A late writer upon the rule of the Jesuits in Paraguay accuses them of using artifices of the like kind for acquiring and maintaining an influence over their converts

§ *Der Christl. Glaube*, v. 1, p. 100; v. 2, p. 135.

appear an entire denial of the miracles, to dress it out and prevent its bareness from being seen, but he does not in fact lift himself above it. Christ, he says, had not merely this deeper acquaintance with nature than any other that ever lived, but stands in a more inward connection with nature. He is able to evoke, as from her hidden recesses, her most inward sanctuary, powers which none other could; although still powers which lay in her already. These facts, which seem exceptional, were deeply laid in the first constitution of the law; and now, at this turning point of the world's history, by the providence of God, who had arranged all things from the beginning of the world for the glory of his Son, did at his bidding emerge. Yet single and without analogy as they were, they belonged to the law as truly as when the aloe puts forth its flower, or is said to put it forth, once in its hundred years, it yet does this according to its own innermost nature. For ninety and nine years it would have seemed to men not to be the nature of the plant to flower, yet the flowering of the hundredth year is only the coming out of its truest nature.

We see in this scheme that attempt to reconcile and atone between revelation and science, which was the great purpose of Schleiermacher's writings. Yet it is impossible to accept the reconciliation which he offers; as it is really made, however the sacrifice may be concealed, altogether at the expense of the miracle—which, in fact, is no miracle, if it lay in nature already, if it was not a new thing, if it was only the evoking of old and latent forces in nature, not the bringing in of the new powers of a higher world, if the mysterious processes and powers by which those works were brought about, are only undiscovered, not undiscoverable, by the efforts of human inquiry.

Augustine has sometimes been quoted as maintaining this scheme of the relatively miraculous, but altogether with injustice. It is quite true that, in arguing with the heathen, he does demand why they refuse to give credence to the Scripture miracles, when they believe so much that can in no way be explained by any laws which their experience gave them, and adduces some curious but actual, and some also entirely fabulous, phenomena of the natural world, such as fountains cold by night and hot by day—others which extinguished a lighted torch, but set on fire an extinguished one—stones which, once kindled, could not be quenched—magnets which attracted iron, and other wonders, to which he and they gave credence alike.\* But it is not herein his meaning to draw down the miracles to a level with natural appearances, hitherto unexplained, but capable of, and waiting their explanation. Rather in

\* *De Civ. Dei*, l. 21, c. 5.

these natural appearances he sees direct interpositions of the Divine Power; he does not reckon that any added knowledge will bring them under laws of human experience, and therefore he lifts them up to a level with the miracles. He did not merge the miracles in nature, but drew up a portion of nature into the region of the miraculous. However greatly as a natural philosopher he may have been here at fault, yet all extenuating of the miracle was far from him; indeed he ever refers it to the omnipotence of God as to its ultimate ground.\*

When he affirms that much *seems* to be against nature, but nothing truly is, this may sound at first like the same statement of the miraculous being what it is merely in relation to certain persons and certain stages of our knowledge of this outward world. But it is only in sound that it is similar. He has quite a different thought of nature from any that will allow such to be his meaning. Nature is for him but the outward expression of the will of God; and all which he affirms is, that God never can be contrary to God; that there can be no collision of his wills; that whatever comes in is as true an order, the result of as real a law, as that which gives place to it; and this must needs be, since it has come in according to the will of God, which will is itself the highest order, and law, and harmony.†

## 6. THE RATIONALISTIC. (PAULUS.)

The rise of rationalism—which term I use for convenience sake, and without at all consenting to its fitness, for it is as absurd a misnomer as when that in the last century was called *free-thinking*, which was assuredly to end in the slavery of all thought—the rise of rationalism seems to have been in this manner;—that it was an escape from the conclusions of mere Deists concerning Christ's person and his Word, upon the part of those who had indeed abandoned the true faith of the Church concerning its Head; yet were not willing to give up the last lingering vestiges of their respect for Holy Scripture and for him of whom Scripture testified. They with whom this system grew up could no longer believe the miracles, they could no longer believe the great miracle in which all other are easily included, a Son of God, in the

\* *De Civ. Dei*, l. 21, c. 7.

† See the quotation from Augustine, p. 21. That he had clearly in his eye the essential property of a miracle, how it should be the coming in of a new power of God into nature, is plain from innumerable passages such as this (*De Civ. Dei*, l. 10, c. 16): *Miraculi, . . . non ea dico quæ intervallis temporum oculis ipsius mundi causis verumtamen sub divinâ providentiâ constitutis et ordinatis monstrosa contingunt, quales sunt inusitati partus animalium, et cælo terræque rerum insolita facies.*



Church's sense of the words ; they, too, were obliged to fall in with the first principles of the infidel adversary, that any who professed to accomplish miracles was either self-deceived or a deceiver, even as they who recorded such as having happened stood in the same dilemma.

But what if it could be shown that Christ never professed to do any miracles, nor the sacred historians to record any ? if it could be shown that the sacred narratives, rightly read, were against any such supposition, and that it was only the lovers of, and cravers after, the marvellous, who had found any miracles there ;—the books themselves having been intended to record merely natural events ? Were not this an escape from the whole difficulty ? The divine, it is true, in these narratives would disappear ; that however they did not desire to save ; that they had already given up : but the human would be vindicated ; the good faith, the honesty, the entire credibility of the Scripture historians, would stand fast. And in Christ himself there would be still that to which they could look up with reverence and love ; they could still believe in him as the truthful founder of a religion which they did not desire to renounce altogether. No longer being, as the Church declared him, the worker of wonders, clothed with power from on high, nor professing to be that which he was not, as the blasphemers affirmed, he would still abide for them in the fulness of his beneficent activity, as he went up and down the world, healing and blessing, though with only the same means which other men had at command.

Their attempt was certainly a bold one ; to suffer the sacred text to stand, and yet to find no miracles in it, did appear a hopeless task ; for this is that which altogether distinguishes this system from later mythic theories, that it does accept the New Testament as entirely historic ; it does appeal to the word of Scripture as the ground and proof of its assertions ; its great assertion being that the Evangelists did not intend to relate miracles, but ordinary facts of every-day experience, works done by Jesus, now of friendship and humanity, now of medical skill, now also of chance and good fortune, or other actions which, from one cause or other, seemed to them of sufficient significance to be worth recording. Thus Christ, they say, did not heal an impotent man at Bethesda, but only detected an impostor ; he did not change water into wine at Cana, but brought in a new supply of wine when that of the house was exhausted ; he did not multiply the loaves, but, distributing his own and his disciples' little store, set an example of liberality which was quickly followed by others who had like stores, and in this way there was sufficient for all. He did not cure blindness otherwise than any skilful oculist might do it ;—which indeed, they observe, is clear ; for with his own lips he declared that he needed light for so delicate an operation—

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work;” (John ix. 4); he did not walk on the sea, but on the shore; he did not tell Peter to find a piece of money in the fish’s mouth, but to catch as many fish as would sell for that money; he did not raise Lazarus from the dead, but guessed, from the nature of his disease, that he was only in a swoon, and happily found it so.

This entire scheme, which many had already tried here and there, but which first appeared full blown and consistently carried through in the *Commentary* of Dr. Paulus,\* did not long survive in its first vigor. It perished under blows received from many quarters; for, not to speak of a reviving faith in the hearts of many, that God could do more than man could understand, even the children of this world directed against it the keenest shafts of their ridicule. Every philologist, nay, every man who believed that language had any laws, was its natural enemy, for it stood only by the violation of all these laws. Even the very advance of unbelief was fatal to it, for in it there was a slight lingering respect to the Word of God; moved by which respect it sought forcibly to bring that Word into harmony with its theory, as a better alternative than the renouncing the authority of that Word altogether. But when men arose, who did not shrink from the other alternative, who had no desire to hold by that Word at all, then there was nothing to hinder them from at once coming back to the common-sense view of the subject, and one which no art could long succeed in concealing, namely, that these Evangelists did intend to record supernatural events. Those to whom the Scriptures were *no* authority had at least this advantage, that they were not under the temptation to twist and pervert them, so to bring them into apparent accordance with their systems.

This scheme of interpretation, thus assailed from so many sides, and being merely artificial, quickly succumbed. And now, even in the land of its birth, it has entirely perished; on the one side a deeper faith, on the other a more rampant unbelief, have encroached on and wholly swallowed up the territory which it occupied. It is indeed so little the form in which an assault on Revelation will ever again clothe itself, and may be so entirely regarded as one of the cast-off garments of unbelief, now despised and trodden under foot even of those who once glorified themselves in it, that I have not alluded, save very slightly and passingly, to it in the body of my book. Once or twice I have noticed its curiosities of interpretation, its substitutions, as they have been happily termed, of *philological* for *historical* wonders. The reader who is curious to see how Dr. Paulus and his compeers arrived

\* First published in 1800.

at the desired result of exhausting the narrative of its miraculous element, will find specimens in the notes upon the feeding of the five thousand, and the finding of the stater in the fish's mouth.

### 7. THE HISTORICO-CRITICAL. (WOOLSTON, STRAUSS.)

The last assault upon the miracles is that which may be not unfilily termed the historico-critical. It affirms that they are so full of contradictions, psychological and other improbabilities, discrepancies between the accounts of one Evangelist and another, that upon close handling they crumble to pieces, and are unable to stand as history. Among the English deists of the last century, Woolston especially addressed himself in this way to the undermining the historic credit of these narratives. He was brought to this evil work in a singular way, and abides a mournful example of the extremes whither spite and mortified vanity would carry a weak man, though, as all testimonies concur in acknowledging, at one time of estimable conversation, and favorably known for his temperate life, his charity to the poor, and other evidences of an inward piety. Born in 1669, and educated at Cambridge, where he became a fellow of Sidney, he first attracted unfavorable notice by a certain crack-brained enthusiasm for the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, which he carried to all lengths. Whether he owed this to the works of Philo and Origen, or whether he only strengthened and nourished an already existing predilection by the study of their writings, is not exactly clear; but it had become a sort of "fixed idea" in his mind. At first, although just offence was taken at more than one publication of his, in which his allegorical system was carried out at the expense apparently of the historic truth of the Scripture, yet as it was not considered that he meant any mischief, as it was not likely that he would exert any very wide influence, he was suffered to follow his own way, unvisited by any serious censures from the higher authorities of the Church. Meeting however with opposition in many quarters, and unable to carry the clergy with him, he broke out at last in unmeasured invectives against them, and in a virulent pamphlet\* styled them "slaves of the letter," "Baal-priests," "blind leaders of the blind," and was on account of this pamphlet deprived of his fellowship (1721).

\* In his *Letter to the Rev. Dr. Bennett upon this question, Whether the Quaker<sup>s</sup> do not the nearest of any other sect resemble the primitive Christians in principle and practices.* By Aristobulus. London, 1720.

From this time it seemed as if an absolute fury possessed him: not merely the Church, but Christianity itself, was the object of his attack. Whether his allegorical system of interpretation had indeed ended, as it was very likely to do, in depriving him of all faith in God's Word, and he retained his professed veneration for its spiritual meaning only that he might, under shelter of that, more securely advance to the assault of its historical foundations, or whether he did still retain this in truth, it was now at any rate only subordinate and subservient to his purposes of revenge. To these he was ready to offer up every other consideration. When then in that great controversy which was raging in the early part of the last century, the defenders of revealed religion intrenched themselves behind the miracles, as defences from which they could never be driven, as being irrefragable proofs of the divine origin of Christianity, Woolston undertook, by the engines of his allegorical interpretation, to dislodge them from these also, and with this aim published his notorious *Letters on the Miracles*.\* It is his manner

\* These six *Letters*, first published as separate pamphlets between 1727-29, had an immense circulation, and were read with the greatest avidity. Voltaire, who was in England just at the time of their publication, says that thirty thousand copies of them were sold, and that large packets of them were forwarded to the American colonies. In the copy I am using, the different letters range from the third to the sixth edition, and this almost immediately after their first publication. Indeed, Swift in his lines on his own death, written 1731, speaks of something much more than this, and quite consents with Voltaire's account of the immense popularity which they enjoyed. He makes Lintot, the bookseller, say,—

"Here's Woolston's tracts, the *twelfth* edition,  
 'Tis read by every politician;  
 The county members when in town  
 To all their boroughs send them down;  
 You never met a thing so smart;  
 The county have them all by heart;" &c.

Their circulation was so great, and their mischief so wide, that above sixty answers were published within a very short period. Gibson, then Bishop of London, addressed five pastoral letters to his diocese against them; and other chief divines of England, as Sherlock, Pearce, Smallbrooke, found it needful to answer them. Of the replies which I have seen, SMALLBROOKE'S (Bishop of St. David's) *Vindication of our Saviour's Miracles*, 1729, is the most learned and the best. But one cannot help being painfully struck upon this and other occasions with the exceeding poverty and feebleness of the antideistical literature of England in that day of need; the low grounds which it occupies; the little enthusiasm which the cause awakened in its defenders. With regard to Woolston himself, the paltry shifts with which he sought to evade the consequences of his blasphemy,—and there is an infinite meanness in the way in which he professes, while blaspheming against the works of Christ, to be only assailing them in the letter that he may vindicate them in the spirit,—thus and other such poor eva-

in these to take certain miracles which Christ did, or which were wrought in relation of him, two or three in a letter, and he then seeks to show that, understood in their literal sense, they contain such extravagancies, contradictions, and the like, that we can never suppose that Christ actually did them, or that the Evangelists, as honest men, men who had the credit of their Lord at heart, intended to record them as having been actually wrought, or desired us to receive them otherwise than as allegories, spiritual truths clothed in the form of historic events. The enormous difference between himself and those early Church writers, to whom he appeals, and whose views he professes to be only re-asserting,—a difference of which it is impossible that he could have been ignorant,—is this: they said, This history, being real, has also a deeper ideal sense; he upon the contrary, Since it is impossible that this history can be real, therefore it must have a spiritual significance. They build upon the establishment of the historic sense, he upon its ruins.\*

When he wants to utter grosser blasphemies than in his own person he dares, or than would befit the standing point which he has assumed from whence to assault Revelation, he introduces a Jewish rabbi, and suffers him to speak without restraint, himself only observing, “This is what an adversary might say; to these accusations we Christians expose ourselves so long as we cleave to the historic letter; we only can escape from thence by forsaking that, and holding fast the allegorical meaning alone.” I shall not (as it is not needful) offend the Christian reader by the reproduction of any of his coarser ribaldry, which has sufficient cleverness to have made it mischievous enough, but will endeavor to show by a single example the manner in which he seeks to make weak points in the Scripture narratives. He is dealing with the miracle of the man sick with the palsy, who was let through the broken roof of the house where Jesus was, and thereupon healed. (Mark ii.

sions failed to protect him from the pains and penalties of the law. He was fined twenty-five pounds for each of his Letters, sentenced to be imprisoned for a year, and was not to be released till he could find sureties for his good behaviour. These he was not able to procure, and he died in prison in 1731.

\* Their canon was ever this, which Gregory the Great uttered when he said (*Hom.* 40 *in Evang.*): Tunc namque allegoriæ fructus suaviter carpitur, cum prius per historiam in veritatis radice solidatur; and they abound in such earnest warnings as this of Augustine's: Ante omnia tamen, fratres, hoc in nomine Dei admonemus . . . ut quando auditis exponi Sacras Scripturas narrantes quæ gesta sunt, prius illud quod lectum est credatis sic gestum quomodo lectum est, ne subtracto fundamento rei gestæ, quasi in aëre quæretis ædificare. Compare what he says on the history of Jonah, *Ep.* 102, qu. 6, § 33.

1—12.) But how, he asks, should there have been such a crowd to hear Jesus preach at Capernaum, where he was so well known and so little admired! and then, if there was that crowd, what need of such urgent haste? it was but waiting an hour or two, till the multitude had dispersed; “I should have thought their faith might have worked patience.” Why did not Jesus tell the people to make way? would they not have done so readily, since to see a miracle was the very thing they wanted? How should the pulleys, ropes, and ladder have been at hand to haul him up? How strange, that they should have had hatchets and hammers ready to break through the spars and rafters of the roof, and stranger still that the good man of the house should have endured, without a remonstrance, his property to be so much injured! How did those below escape without injury from the falling tiles and plaster? And if there were a door in the roof, as some, to mitigate the difficulty, tell us, why did not Jesus go up to the roof, and there speak the healing word, and so spare all this trouble and damage and danger?

But enough;—it is evident that this style of objection could be infinitely multiplied in regard to any history. There is always something else that might have been done besides the thing that was done. It is after this taking to pieces of the narrative, this triumphant showing, as he affirms, that it cannot stand in the letter, that he proceeds, as a sort of salvo, to say it may very well stand in its spirit, as an allegory and symbol of something else; and that so, and so only it was intended. This is what he offers by way of this higher meaning in the present case: By the palsy of this man is signified “a dissoluteness of morals and unsteadiness of faith and principles, which is the condition of mankind at present, who want Jesus’ help for the cure of it.” The four bearers are the four Evangelists, “on whose faith and doctrine mankind is to be carried unto Christ.” The house to the top of which he is to be carried is “the intellectual edifice of the world, otherwise called Wisdom’s house.” But “to the sublime sense of the Scriptures, called the top of the house, is man to be taken; he is not to abide in the low and literal sense of them.” Then if he dare to “open the house of wisdom, he will presently be admitted to the presence and knowledge of Jesus.”\*

\* *Fourth Discourse on the Miracles*, pp. 51—67. Strauss’s own judgment of his predecessor in this line very much agrees with that given above. He says, “Woolston’s whole presentation of the case veers between these alternatives. If we are determined to hold fast the miracles as actual history, then they forfeit all divine character, and sink down into unworthy tricks and common frauds. Will we, on the other hand, not let go the divine in these narrations, then must we, with the sacrifice of their historic character, understand them only as the setting forth, in historic guise, of

Not very different is Strauss's own method of proceeding. He wields the same weapons of destructive criticism, thinking to show how each history will crumble at his touch—will remain a heap of improbabilities, which no one can any longer maintain. It needs not to say that he is a more accomplished adversary than Woolston, with far ampler resources at command,—more, if not of his own, yet of other men's learning; inheriting as he does all the negative criticism of the last hundred years, of an epoch, that is, which has been sufficiently fruitful in this kind. Here indeed is in great part the secret of the vast sensation which his work for a season caused: all that was scattered up and down in many books he has brought together and gathered into a single focus; all which other men had spoken faintly and with reserve, he with a greater boldness has spoken out; he has dared to give utterance to all which was trembling upon the lips of numbers, but which, from one cause or another, they had shrunk from openly declaring. Yet as regards the treatment of the miracles,—for with that only we have now to do,—there are differences between him and Woolston. He unites in his own person the philosophical and the critical assailant of these; for he starts from the philosophic ground of Spinoza, that the miracle is impossible, since the laws of nature are the only and the necessary laws of God; and he then proceeds to the critical examination of the Gospel miracles in detail; but of course in each case to the trial of that which is already implicitly tried and condemned. Thus, if he is ever at a loss—if any of them give him trouble—if they oppose a stubborn resistance to the powerful solvents which he applies, threatening to stand in despite of all, he immediately falls back on his philoso-

certain spiritual truths; for which, indeed, the authority of the chiefest allegorists in the Church, as Origen and Augustine and others, may be adduced;—yet so, that Woolston imputes falsely to them the intention of thrusting out, as he would do, the literal interpretation by the allegorical altogether; while yet they, a few instances on Origen's part being excepted, are inclined to let both explanations stand, the one by the other. Woolston's statement of the case may leave a doubt to which of the two alternatives which he sets over against one another, he with his own judgment inclines. If one calls to mind, that before he came forward as an opponent of Christianity, as received in his day, he occupied himself with allegorical interpretations of the Scripture, one might regard this as the opinion which was most truly his own. But on the other hand, all that he can adduce of incongruities in the literal sense of the miracle histories is brought forward with such one-sided zeal, and so colors the whole with its mocking tone, that one must rather conjecture that the Deist seeks only, by urging the allegorical sense, to secure his own rear, that so he may the more boldly let himself loose on the literal meaning." (*Leben Jesu*, 3rd edit., v. 1, p. 14.) There is a very accurate and carefully written account of Woolston, and his life and writings, in LECHELER'S *Geschichte des Englischen Deismus*, pp. 289—311.

phic ground, and exclaims, "But if we admit it was thus, then we should have here a miracle, and we have started from the first principle, that such is inconceivable." This mockery in every case he repeats, trying them one by one, which have all been condemned by him beforehand in the gross.

There is, too, this further difference, that while Woolston professed to consider the miracles as the conscious clothing of spiritual truth, allegories devised artificially, and, so to speak, in cold blood, for the setting forth truths of the kingdom, Strauss gives them a freer birth and a somewhat nobler origin. They are the halo of glory with which the infant Church gradually and without any purposes of deceit clothed its Founder and its Head. His mighty personality, of which it was livingly conscious, caused it ever to surround him with new attributes of glory. All which men had ever craved and longed for—deliverance from physical evil, dominion over the crushing powers of nature, victory over death itself,—all which had ever in a lesser measure been attributed to any,—they lent in larger abundance, in unrestrained fulness, to him whom they felt greater than all. The system may be most fitly characterized as the Church making its Christ, and not Christ his Church.

With one only observation I will pass on, and not detain the reader any longer from more pleasant and more profitable portions of the subject. It is this, that here, as so often, we find the longings and cravings of men after a redemption, in the widest sense of that word, made to throw suspicion upon him in whom these longings and cravings are affirmed to have been satisfied. But if we believe a divine life stirring at the root of our humanity, the depth and universality of such longings is a proof rather that they were meant some day to find their satisfaction—that they were not always to be hopes and dreams; and if so, in whom, but in him whom we preach—in whom, but in Christ? What other beside him could, with the slightest show of reason, be put forward as the fulfiller of the world's hopes? If we do not believe in this divine life, nor in a divine leading of our race—if we hold a mere brutal theory about man, it were then better altogether to leave discussing miracles and Gospels, which indeed have no meaning for, as they stand in no relation to, us.



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE APOLOGETIC WORTH OF THE MIRACLES.

A most interesting question remains : namely this, What is the place which those who are occupied with marshalling and presenting the evidences of Revelation should give to the miracles ? what is the service which they may render here ? The circumstances have been already noticed which were sufficient to hinder them from taking a very prominent place in the early Apologies for Christianity.\* The Christian miracles had not sufficiently extricated themselves from the multitude of false miracles,—nor was Christ sufficiently discerned and distinguished from the various wonder-workers of his own and of past ages ; so that, even if men had admitted his miracles to be true and godlike, they would have been hardly nearer to the acknowledging of Christianity as the one faith, or of him as “the way, the truth, and the life.”

But a different and far more important position has been assigned them in later times, especially during the last two hundred years ; and the tone and temper of modern theology abundantly explains the greater prominence, sometimes, I believe, the undue, because the exclusive, prominence, which in this period they have assumed. The apologetic literature of this time, partook, as was inevitable, in the general depression of all its theology. There is no one, I think, who would now be satisfied with the general tone and spirit in which the defences of the faith, written during the two last centuries, and beginning with the me-

\* Thus, in the *Apologies* of Justin Martyr, they are scarcely made use of at all. It is otherwise indeed with Arnobius, who (*Adv. Gen.*, l. 1, c. 42,) lays much stress on them. Speaking of the truth of Christianity and of Christ's mission, he says, *Nulla major est comprobatio quàm gestarum ab eo fides rerum, quàm virtutum*,—and then appeals through ten eloquent chapters to his miracles.

morable work of Grotius,\* are composed. Much as this and many others contain of admirable, yet in well nigh all that great truth of the Italian poet seems to have been forgotten,

“ They struggle vainly to preserve a part,  
Who have not courage to contend for all.”

These apologists, on the contrary, would seem very often to have thought that Deism was best to be resisted by reducing Christianity to a sort of revealed Deism. Like men that had renounced the hope of defending all, their whole endeavor was to save something, and when their pursuers pressed them hard, they were willing to delay the pursuit by casting to them as a prey much that ought to have been the dearest to themselves. It has been well observed, that they were like men who should cry “Thieves and robbers!” who were yet themselves all the while throwing out of the windows the most precious things of the house; and thus it sometimes happened that the good cause suffered quite as much from its defenders as its assailants: for that enemies should be fierce and bitter, this was only to be looked for; but that friends, those in whose keeping was the citadel, should be timid and half-hearted, and ready for a compromise, this was indeed an augury of ill. Now this, which caused so much to be thrown greatly out of sight, as generally the mysteries of our faith, which brought about a slight of the inner arguments for revelation, caused that from the miracles to assume a disproportionate magnitude. A value too exclusive was set on them; they were rent away from the truths for which they witnessed, and which witnessed for them—only too much like seals torn off from the document which at once *they* rendered valid, and which gave importance to them. And thus, in this unnatural isolation, separated from Christ’s person and doctrine, the whole burden of proof was laid on them. *They* were the apology for Christianity, the reason which men were taught they should give for the faith which was in them.†

It is not hard to see the motives which led to this; they were chiefly the desire to get an *absolute* demonstration of the Christian faith—one which objectively should be equally good for every man: it was the wish

\* *De Veritate Religionis Christiana*.

† I include, in the proofs drawn from the miracles, those drawn from the Old Testament prophecies—for it was only *as miracles*, (*miracula præscientiæ*, as the others are *miracula potentiæ*), that these prophecies were made to do service and arrayed in the forefront of this battle; as by the learned and acute Haet, in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, in which the fulfilment of prophecy in the person of Jesus of Nazareth is altogether the point round which the whole argument turns, as he himself in the *Preface*, § 2, declares.

to bring the matter to the same sort of proof as exists for a proposition in mathematics or in logic. And consistently with this we see the whole argument cast exactly into the same forms of definitions, postulates, axioms, and propositions.\* But at the same time the state of mind which made men to desire either to find for themselves, or to furnish others with, proofs of this nature, was not altogether healthy. It was plain that their faith had become very much an external historic one, when they thus eagerly looked round for outward evidences, and found a value only in such; instead of turning in upon themselves as well, for evidence that they had “not followed cunningly devised fables,” and saying, “We *know* the things which we believe—they are to us truer than aught else can be, for we have the witness of the Spirit for their truth. We have found these things to be true, for they have come to us in demonstration of the Spirit and in power.” Instead of an appeal to those mighty influences which Christ’s words and doctrine exercise on every heart that receives them, to their transforming, transfiguring power, to the miracles of grace which are the heritage of every one who has believed to salvation, instead of an addressing of the gainsayers in the very language of the Lord, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God,” (John vii. 17,) this all as mystical and uncertain, (instead of being seen to be, as it truly was, the most certain thing of all,) was thrown into the background. Men were afraid to trust themselves and their cause to arguments like these, and would know of no other statement of the case than this barren and hungry one:—Christianity is a divine revelation, and this the miracles which accompanied its promulgation prove. What must first be found fault with in this is the wilful abandonment of such large regions of proof, which the Christian apologist ought triumphantly to have occupied as his proper domain—the whole region, mainly and chiefly, of the inner spiritual life; his foregoing an appeal to the mysterious powers of regeneration and renewal, which are ever found to follow on a true adherence to him who is the Giver of this faith, and who has pledged himself to these very results.

On such he might at least have ventured, when he was seeking not to convince an unbeliever, but, as would be often his aim, to carry one that already believed round the whole circle of the defences of his position—to make him aware of the relative strength of each—to give him

\* For example, by Huet in his work referred to above. He claims for the way of proof upon which he is entering that it is the safest: *Præfatio*, § 2: Utpote quæ constet hoc genere demonstrationis, quod non minus certum sit quàm demonstratio quævis geometrica.

a scientific insight into the grounds on which his faith rested. Here, at any rate, the appeal to what he had himself known and tasted of the powers of the world to come, might well have found room. For, to use the words of Coleridge,\* “Is not a true, efficient conviction of a moral truth, is not *the creating of a new heart*, which collects the energies of a man’s whole being in the focus of the conscience, the one essential miracle, the same and of the same evidence to the ignorant and to the learned, which no superior skill can counterfeit, human or demoniacal ; is it not emphatically that leading of the Father, without which no man can come to Christ ; is it not that implication of doctrine in the miracle, and of miracle in the doctrine, which is the bridge of communication between the senses and the soul ;—that predisposing warmth which renders the understanding susceptible of the specific impressions from the historic, and from all other outward, seals of testimony ?” And even if arguing with one who had never submitted himself to these blessed powers, and to whose experience therefore no like appeal could be made, yet even for him there is the outward utterance of this inward truth, in that which he could not deny, save as he denied or was ignorant of every thing, which would make him one to be argued with at all—the fact, I mean, of a Christendom—the standing miracle of a Christendom “commensurate and almost synonymous with the civilized world”—the mighty changes which this religion has wrought in the earth—the divine fruits which it every where has borne—the new creation which it has been—the way in which it has taken its place in the world, not as a forcible intruder, but finding all that world’s pre-established harmonies ready to greet and welcome it, ready to give it play and room—philosophy, and art, and science, practically confessing that only under it could they attain their highest perfection, that in something they had all been dwarfed and stunted and insufficient before. Little as it wears of the glory which it ought to have, yet it wears enough to proclaim that its origin was more than mundane ; surely from a Christendom, even such as it shows itself now, it is fair to argue back to a Christ such as the Church receives as the only adequate cause. It is an oak which from no other acorn could have unfolded itself into so goodly a tree.

It is true that in this there is an abandoning of the attempt to put the proof of Christianity into the same form as a proposition in an exact science. There is no more the claim made of giving it their kind of certainty. But this, which may seem at first sight a loss, is indeed a gain ; for the argument for all which as Christians we believe is in very truth not logical and single, but moral and cumulative ; and the attempt

\* *The Friend*, Vol. 3, Essay II.

to substitute a formal proof, where the deepest necessities of the soul demand a moral, is one of the most grievous shocks which the moral sense can receive, as it is one, too, of the most fruitful sources of unbelief. Few who have had books of evidences put into their hands, constructed upon this principle, but must remember the shock which they suffered from them—how it took them, it may be, some time to recover the tone of their minds, and how only by falling back upon what they themselves had felt and known of the living power of Christ's words and doctrine in their own hearts, could they deliver themselves from the injurious influences, the seeds of doubt and of misgiving, which these books had now for the first time perhaps sown in their minds. They must remember how they asked themselves, in deep inner trouble of soul: "Are these indeed the grounds, and the only grounds, upon which the deep foundations of my spiritual life repose? is this all that I have to answer? are these, and no more, the reasons of the faith that is in me?" And then, if at any moment there arose a suspicion that some link in this chain of outward proof was wanting, or that any would not bear all the weight which was laid upon it—and men will be continually tempted to try the strength of that on which they have trusted all—there was nothing to fall back upon, with which to scatter and put to flight a suspicion such as this. And that such should arise, at least in many minds, were inevitable; for how many points, as we have seen, are there at which suspicion may intrude. Is a miracle possible? Is a miracle provable? Were the witnesses of these miracles competent? Did they not too lightly admit a supernatural cause, when there were adequate natural ones which they failed to note? These works may have been good for the eye-witnesses, but what are they for me? And these doubts and questionings might be multiplied without number. Happy is the man, and he only is happy, who, if the outworks of his faith are at any time thus assailed, can betake himself to an impregnable inner citadel, from whence in due time to issue forth and repossess even those exterior defences, who can fall back on those inner grounds of belief, in which there can be no mistake, that testimony of the Spirit, which is above and better than all.\*

And as it is thus with him, who entirely desiring to believe, is only unwillingly disturbed with doubts and suggestions, which he would give worlds to be rid of for ever, so on the other hand the expectation that by arguments thrown apparently into forms of strict reasoning there is any compelling to the faith one who does not wish to believe,

\* See the admirable words of Calvin, *Instit.*, l. 1, c. 7, § 4, 5, on the Holy Scripture as ultimately *ἀδύνατος*.

is absurd, and an expectation which all experience contradicts. All that he is, and all that he is determined to be, has bribed such an one to an opposite conclusion. Rather than believe that a miracle has taken place, a miracle from the upper world, and connected with doctrines of holiness, to which doctrines he is resolved to yield no obedience, he will take refuge in any the most monstrous supposition of fraud, or ignorance, or folly, or collusion. If no such solution presents itself, he will wait for such, rather than accept the miracle, with its hated adjunct of the truth which it confirms. In what different ways the same miracle of Christ wrought upon different spectators! He raised a man from the dead; here was the same outward fact for all; but how diverse the effects!—some believed and some went and told the Pharisees. (John xi. 45, 46.) Heavenly voices were heard,—and some said it thundered, so dull and inarticulate were those sounds to them, while others knew that they were voices wherein was the witness of God to his own Son. (John xii. 28—30.)

Are then, it may be asked, the miracles to occupy no place at all in the array of proofs for the certainty of the things which we have believed? On the contrary, a most important place. We should greatly miss them if they did not appear in sacred history, if we could not point to them there; for they belong to the very idea of a Redeemer, which would remain most incomplete without them. We could not ourselves, without having that idea infinitely weakened and impoverished, conceive of him as not doing such works; and those to whom we presented him might make answer, "Strange, that one should come to deliver men from the bondage of nature which was crushing them, and yet himself have been subject to its heaviest laws,—himself wonderful, and yet his appearance accompanied by no analogous wonders in nature,—claiming to be the Life, and yet himself helpless in the encounter with death; however much he promised in word, never realizing any part of his promises in deed, giving nothing in hand, no first fruits of power, no pledges of greater things to come." They would have a right to ask, "Why did he give no signs that he came to connect the visible with the invisible world? why did he nothing to break the yoke of custom and experience, nothing to show men that the constitution which he pretended to reveal has a true foundation?"\* And who would not feel that they had right in this, that a Saviour who so bore himself during his earthly life, and his actual daily encounter with evil, would have been felt to be no Saviour? that he must needs show himself, if he were to meet the wants of men, mighty not only in

\* MAURICE'S *Kingdom of Christ*, v. 2, p. 264.

word but in work? When we object to the use that has been often made of these works, it is only because they have been forcibly severed from the whole complex of Christ's life and doctrine, and presented to the contemplation of men apart from these; it is only because, when on his head who is the Word of God, are "many crowns," (Rev. xxix. 12,) one only has been singled out in proof that he is King of kings, and Lord of lords. The miracles have been spoken of as though they borrowed nothing from the truths which they confirmed, but those truths every thing from them; when indeed the true relation is one of mutual interdependence, the miracles proving the doctrines, and the doctrines approving the miracles,\* and both held together for us in a blessed unity, in the person of him who spake the words and did the works, and through the impress of highest holiness and of absolute truth and goodness, which that person leaves stamped on our souls;—so that it may be more truly said that we believe the miracles for Christ's sake, than Christ for the miracles' sake.† Neither when we thus affirm that the miracles prove the doctrine, and the doctrine the miracles, are we arguing in a circle: rather we are receiving the sum total of the impression which this divine revelation is intended to make on us, instead of taking an impression only partial and one-sided.

\* See PASCAL'S *Pensées*, c. 27, Sur les Miracles.

† Augustine was indeed affirming the same when against the Donatists, and their claims to be workers of wonders he said (*De Unit. Eccles.*, c. 19): Quæcunque talia in catholicâ [ecclesiâ] fiunt, ideo sunt approbanda, quia in catholicâ fiunt, non ideò manifestatur, catholica, quia hæc in eâ fiunt.





# THE MIRACLES.

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## I.

### THE WATER MADE WINE.

JOHN ii. 1—11.

“THIS *beginning of miracles*” is as truly an introduction to all other miracles which Christ did, as the parable of the Sower is an introduction to all other parables which he spoke. (Mark iv. 31.) No other miracle would have had so much in it of prophecy, would have served as so fit an inauguration to the whole future work of the Son of God. For that work might be characterized throughout as an ennobling of the common and a transmuting of the mean—a turning of the water of earth into the wine of heaven. Yet not to anticipate remarks which will find their fitter place, when the circumstances of this miracle have been more fully considered, what is this “*third day*,” which St. John gives as the date of this present miracle? It is generally, and, I believe, correctly answered, the third after the day on which Philip and Nathanael, of whose coming to Christ there is mention immediately before, (i. 43,) had attached themselves to him. He and his newly-won disciples would have passed without difficulty from the banks of Jordan to Cana\* in two days, and thus might have been easily present

\* Among the most felicitous and most convincing of Robinson’s slighter rectifications of the geography of Palestine, (*Biblical Researches*, v. 3, pp. 204—208,) is that in which he reinstates the true Cana in honors which had long been usurped by another village. It would seem that in the neighborhood of Nazareth are two villages, one of which bears the title of Kefr Kenna, and is about an hour and a half N. E. from Nazareth; the other, Kâna el-Jelil, about three hours’ distance, and nearly due

at the "marriage," or, better, the marriage festival, upon the third day after that event. But besides the Lord and his disciples, "*the mother of Jesus was there*" also. It is most likely, indeed there is every reason to suppose, that Joseph was now dead; the last mention of him occurs on the occasion of the Lord's visit as a child to the Temple; he had died, probably, between that time and Christ's open undertaking of his ministry. The disciples called are commonly taken to be the five\* whom he had so lately gathered, Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael, (Bartholemew?) and the fifth, the Evangelist himself. For St. John is generally considered to have been the second of the two scholars of the Baptist mentioned i. 35, 40, of whom Andrew was the other, both from all the circumstances being detailed with so great minuteness, and it being so much in his manner to keep back his own personality under such language as there is used (xiii. 23; xviii. 15; xix. 26, 35). If this was so, he would then be an eye-witness of the miracle which he is relating.†

north. The former, which has only greater nearness in its favor, is now always shown by the monks and other guides to travellers as the Cana of our history, though the name can only with difficulty be twisted to the same, the Kefr having first to be dropped altogether, and in Kenna, the first radical changed and the second left out: while "Kâna el-Jelil" is word for word the "Cana of Galilee" of Scripture, which exactly so stands in the Arabic version of the New Testament. In addition, he decisively proves that the mistake is entirely modern, since it is only since the sixteenth century that Kefr Kenna has thus borne away the honors due rightly to Kâna el-Jelil. Till then, as he shows by numerous references to a line of earlier travellers and topographers reaching through many centuries, the latter was ever considered as the scene of this first miracle of our Lord. It may have helped to further the mistake, and to win for it an easier acceptance, that it was manifestly for the interest of guides and travellers who would spare themselves fatigue and distance, to accept the other in its room, it lying directly on one of the routes between Nazareth and Tiberias, and being far more accessible than the true. The Cana of the New Testament does not occur in the Old, but is mentioned twice by Josephus, who also takes note of it as in Galilee. (*Vita*, § 16, 64; *Bell. Jud.*, l. 1, c. 17. § 5.) The Old Testament has only Kanah in Asher, (Josh. xix. 28,) S. E. of Tyre.

\* Yet later considerations on the first miraculous draught of fishes will leave it not unlikely that "*disciples*" here may mean only the two among the five who do not appear there, namely, Philip and Nathanael.

† A late tradition makes St. John not merely an eye-witness, but to have been himself the bridegroom at this marriage, who, seeing the miracle which Jesus did, forsook the bride and followed him. The author of the Prologue to St. John, attributed to St. Jerome, relates: *Joannem nubere volentem à nuptiis per Dominum fuisse vocatum*, though without more close allusion to this miracle. The Mahometans have received this tradition that John was the bridegroom, from the Christians. (See D'HERBELOT'S *Biblioth. Orient.*, s. v. *Johanna*) Nicophorus tells the story with this variation, that it was not St. John, but Simon the Cœnaamite, who on this hint followed Jesus; but the

We need not wonder to find the Lord of life at that festival; for he came to sanctify all life—its times of joy, as its times of sorrow; and all experience tells us, that it is times of gladness, such as this was now, which especially need such a sanctifying power, such a presence of the Lord. In times of sorrow, the sense of God's presence comes more naturally out: in these it is in danger to be forgotten. He was there, and by his presence there struck the key-note to the whole future tenor of his ministry. He should not be as another Baptist, to withdraw himself from the common paths of men, a preacher in the wilderness: but his should be at once a harder and a higher task, to mingle with and purify the common life of men, to witness for and bring out the glory which was hidden in its every relation.\* And it is not perhaps without its significance, that this should have been especially *a marriage*, which he "adorned and beautified with his presence and first miracle that he wrought." He foresaw that some hereafter should arise in his Church who would despise marriage, or if not despise, yet fail to give the Christian family all its honor.† They should find no countenance from him.‡

*Kαβαρίτης* attached to his name, (Matt. x. 4.) and which is probably the only foundation for this assumption, does not mean, of Cana, but rather is of the same significance as *Ζηλωτής*, the title which elsewhere (Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13.) is given him. He had belonged to these zealots till his zeal for freedom, which hitherto had shown itself in those stormy and passionate outbreaks of the natural man, found its satisfaction in him who came to make free indeed. Yet see what Mr. Greswell says, *Dissert.*, v. 2, p. 128, *seq.*,) against taking *Ζηλωτής* = *Καβαρίτης*.

\* Augustine, or another under his name (*Serm.* 92, Appendix): *Nec dedignatus est conversationem hominum, qui usum carnis exceperat. Nec secularia instituta contempsit, qui ad hæc venerat corrigenda. Interfuit nuptiis, ut concordiæ jura firmaret.* Tertullian, in his reckless method of snatching at any argument, finds rather a slighting of marriage than an honoring it in the fact that Christ, who was present at so many festivals, was yet present at only one marriage. Or this at least he will find, that since Christ was present but at one marriage, *therefore* monogamy is the absolute law of the new covenant. His words are strong (*De Monogamiâ*, c. 9): *Ille vorator et potator homo, prandiorum et cænarum cum publicanis frequentator, semel apud unas nuptias cænat, multis utique nubentibus. Totiens enim voluit celebrare eas, quotiens et esse.*

† EPIPHANIUS, *Hæres.*, 67. Augustine (*In Ev. Joh.*, *Tract.* 19): *Quod Dominus invitatus venerit ad nuptias, etiam exceptâ mysticâ significatione, confirmare voluit quod ipse fecit.*

‡ How precious a witness have we here in the conduct of our Lord against the tendency which our indolence ever favors, of giving up to the world, or still worse, to the devil, any portion or passage of man's life, which, in itself innocent, is capable of being drawn up into the higher world of holiness, as it is in danger of sinking down and coming under the law of the flesh and of the world! How remarkable a contrast does Christ's presence at this wedding feast with his mother and his disciples offer to the manner in which a man even of St. Cyprian's practical strength and energy,

The presence at that feast of himself and his disciples, who were just arrived from a journey, and whose presence might therefore have been in some degree unlooked for, may have increased beyond previous calculation the number of the guests: and so the provision made for their entertainment may have proved insufficient. We gather from ver. 5, where the mother of the Lord gives commandment to the servants, that she was in a house where it was not unseemly for her to mingle, and in some sort to interfere, with the domestic arrangements. It is very possible she may have been akin to one of the parties.\* “*When they wanted wine,*” she was evidently distressed at their embarrassment, and would willingly have removed it. Yet what exactly she should have expected from her divine Son, when she betook herself to him saying, “*They have no wine,*” is hard to determine. We know that this was his first miracle, the “*beginning of miracles,*” (ver 11,) so that she could not, from already having witnessed displays of his power and grace, have now been emboldened to look for more in the same kind. Some, indeed, as Maldonatus mentions, and with whom he is inclined to consent, do not take so absolutely the statement which is there made, but with this limitation understood;—This was the first of his miracles in which he *showed forth* his glory; other such works he may have performed in the smaller circle of his family, and thus have prepared those who laid up such things in their hearts for something of the like kind now. But without evading in this way the plain meaning of the words of the Evangelist, we may well understand how she, who more than any other had kept and pondered in her heart all the tokens and prophetic intimations of the coming glory of her Son, may have believed that in him

gives up these very marriage festivals as occasions where, from the still surviving heathenism of manners, purity must suffer—where the flesh must have its way; so that his counsel is, not to dispute them with the world, not to vindicate them anew for holiness and for God, but only to give them up, and to avoid them altogether (*De Hab. Virg.*, c. 3): Et quoniam continentæ bonum quærimus perniciosæ quæque et infestæ vitemus. Nec illa prætereo quæ dum negligentia in usum veniunt, contra pudicos et sobrios mores licentiam sibi de usurpatione fecerunt. Quasdam non pudet nubentibus interesse. And presently, after describing the disorders of such seasons, he adds, c. 4: Nuptiarum festa improba et convivia lasciva vitentur, quorum periculosa contagio est. Compare the picture which Chrysostom gives of marriage festivals in his time, (v. 3, p. 195, Ben. Ed.)—melancholy witnesses, yet not, as some would have us believe, of a Church which had fallen back into heathen defilements, but as one which had not yet leavened an essentially heathen, though nominally Christian, society, through and through with its own life and power.

\* Lightfoot supposes that it was a marriage in the house of Mary, (John xix. 25,) wife of Cleophas. For the arguments see his *Harmony, in loc.*, and MR. GRESWELL'S *Dissert.*, v. 2, p. 120.

was a latent power equal to the present need, and which he could put forth at his will, however he had restrained it until now.\* Others assume that she had no definite purpose in thus speaking, but only that as she had ever found him a wise counsellor in the least as well as in greatest things, so she turned to him now.† Bengel's explanation is curious, that, it was a suggestion to him that they should leave, and thus by their example break up the assembly before the embarrassment of their hosts should appear.‡

The Romanist expositors have been very anxious to rid our Lord's answer, "*Woman, what have I to do with thee?*" of every shadow of rebuke or blame. Whole essays have been written with this single purpose. Now it is quite true that in the address "*Woman*" there is nothing of the kind—nothing of severity or rebuke, however it may have something of such a sound to an English ear. We find our blessed Lord, even at the moment when probably he was addressing to his mother the last words that he spake to her on earth,—when commending her to the care of the beloved disciple, using the same language, "*Woman, behold thy son.*" (John xix. 26.) So far from any harshness, the compellation has something solemn in it, and always must have, where the dignity of woman is felt and recognized. But it is otherwise with the words following, "*What have I to do with thee?*"§ If we compare them with the same or similar expressions elsewhere, the meaning of them will come clearly out, and it is this, "Let me alone; what is there common to thee and me? we stand in this matter on altogether different grounds." All expositors of the early Church|| have allowed, even by the confession

\* So Theophylact, Euthymius, and Neander. (*Leben Jesu*, p. 370.)

† So Cocceius: Verba nihil aliud portendunt quàm Mariam tanquam sollicitam et parentem operuisse ipsi defectum vini, ex condolentiâ nimirum.

‡ Velim discedas, ut ceteri item discedant, antequam penuria patefiat. Calvin has a still more curious reason for this suggestion: Ut piâ aliquâ exhortatione convivis tædium eximeret, ac simul levaret pudorem sponsi.

§ *Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί*; Cf. Judg. xi. 12; 1 Kin. xvii. 18; 2 Kin. iii. 13, (LXX.) where the same phrase is used; it is elliptic, and the word *κοινὸν* may be supplied. Thus in the second of these passages, "What is there in common to us twain, to me a sinful woman, and thee a man of God, that we should have thus come together to my harm?" And in the third, "What have we in common, I, a prophet of the true God, and thou, the son of that idolatrous king Ahab, that thou shouldst ask counsel of me?" Cf. Josh. xxii. 24; 2 Sam. xvi. 10 (LXX; Matt. viii. 29; Mark i. 24; Luke viii. 28. It is only out of an entire ignorance of the idiom that their explanation could have taken rise, who understand the words, "What is that to thee and me? What concerns it us twain that there is no wine?"

|| Two examples for many. Irenæus (*Con. Hær.*, l. 3, c. 16): Properante Mariâ ad admirabile vini signum, et ante tempus volente participare compendii poculo, Domi-

of the Romanists themselves, that there is more or less of reproof and repulse in these words; and they themselves are obliged to admit that there is the *appearance* of such; but at the same time they deny the reality. Christ so spake, they say,\* to teach, not her, but us, that they were higher respects than those of flesh and blood, even the everlasting interests of God's kingdom, which moved him to the choosing the present moment for the first putting forth of his divine power. This is most true, that it was to teach this; but to teach it first to her, who from her wondrous position as the mother of the Lord, was in chiefest danger of forgetting it.† “She had not yet,” says Chrysostom, “that opinion of him which she ought, but because she bare him, counted that, after the manner of other mothers, she might in all things command him, whom it was more fitting for her to reverence and worship as her Lord.”

Yet whatever amount of rebuke was intended, any harshness which the reply may have in the reading we cannot doubt was mitigated by the manner of its speaking, by the way, too, in which the Lord suffered a near compliance with her request to shine through the apparent refusal. For when she said to the servants, “*Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it,*” it is plain that she saw in his seeming denial a real granting of her desire. Undoubtedly there is something obscure in that command following immediately as it does the words of Christ, “*Mine hour is not yet come.*” For these words, and above all, when taken in connection with those that precede them, seem to put off not merely for a brief period,—for a few minutes, or for an hour,—the manifestation of his glory as the Messiah, but to put it off altogether till some later period of his ministry. Indeed, this “*hour*” is generally, and especially in the language of St. John, the hour of his passion, or of his departure from the

nus repellens ejus intempestivam festinationem, dixit. Quid mihi et tibi est, mulier? nondum venit hora mea, expectans eam horam quæ est à Patre præcognita. He means by the compendii poculum, the cup of wine which should not be the result of the slower and ordinary processes of nature, but made per saltum, at a single intervention of divine power, therefore compendiously. Cf. l. 3, c. 11, and Chrysostom (*Hom. 21 in Joh.*): Ἐβούλετο . . . ἵνα τὴν λαμπρότην ποιῆσαι διὰ τοῦ παιδός, therefore was it that Christ σφοδρότερον ἀπεκρίνατο.

\* Maldonatus: Simulavit se matrem reprehendere, cum minimè reprehenderet, ut ostenderet se non humano, non sanguinis respectu, sed solâ caritate, et ut sese, quis sit, declaret, miraculum facere. St. Bernard had gone before him in this explanation: it was, he says, for our sakes Christ so answered, ut conversos ad Dominum jam non sollicitet carnalium cura parentum, et necessitudines illæ non impediunt exercitium spirituale.

† *Hom. 21 in Joh.* The true parallel to this passage, and that throwing most light on it, is Matt. xii. 46—50.

world, (John vii. 30 ; viii. 20 ; xii. 23, 27 ; xvii. 1,\*) though in a single instance, (John vii. 6,) it may have, as here, a nearer signification. But it is plain that the Blessed Virgin understood them differently, and, as the sequel showed, rightly. “*Mine hour is not yet come ;*” not till the wine is wholly exhausted will his time arrive ; as yet it was only failing : then will be the time to act, when by its complete failure, manifest to all, the miracle will be above suspicion. Otherwise, in Augustine’s words, he might seem rather to *minge* elements than to *change* them.† When all other help fails, then and not till then has Christ’s “*hour*” arrived. Luther here notes, and presents to us for an example, the faith of Mary, who from this apparent repulse could yet draw forth an assurance that her petition, whatever may have been the error of pressing it too hastily, or other fault that clung to it, should yet in due time be heard—so that, with entire confidence of this, she said unto the servants, “*Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it,*” evidently believing not merely that he would comply with her request, but in some degree guessing at and even indicating the manner.

Very beautiful is it here to observe the facility with which our Lord yields himself to the supply, not of the absolute wants merely, but of the superfluities of others. Yet it is not so much the guests whom he has in his eye, as the bridal pair, whose marriage-feast, by the unlooked-for short-coming of the wine, was in danger of being exposed to mockery and scorn.‡ And the gracious Lord has sympathy with *all* needs—with the finer as well as the commoner needs of our life. For all the grace, and beauty, and courtesy of life are taken account of in Christianity, as well as life’s sterner realities ; and the spirit of Christ, in himself and in his disciples, does not slight or despise those any more than these. We may contrast this his readiness to aid others, with the strictness with which he refused to come to the help of his own extremest needs. He who made wine out of water, might have made bread out of stones. But he will do nothing at the suggestion of Satan, though all at the suggestion of love.§

\* It is *ὁ καιρός* there, *ἡ ὥρα* here.

† So the author of a sermon in the *Appendix* to St. Augustine (*Serm.* 92) : *Hæc responsione interim debemus advertere quod de nuptiali vino pars aliqua adhuc fortè resederat. Ideo nondum erat Domini plena hora virtutum, ne miscere magis elementa quàm mutare videretur [ne aqua vino admixta crederetur : Grotius]. Maldonatus : Cur ergo miraculum fecit, si tempus non venerat ? Non venerat, cùm mater petivit ; venerat cùm fecit, modico licet intervallo. So Cyril, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius.*

‡ Hilary (*De Trin.*, l. 3, § 5) : *Sponsus tristis est, familia turbatur, sollemnitatis convivii periclitatur.*

§ Augustine (*Serm.* 123, c. 2) : *Qui poterat talia facere, dignatus est indigere. Qui fecit de aquâ vinum, potuit facere et de lapidibus panem.*

“*There were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.*” Every thing is here narrated, as Chrysostom\* observes, so as to exclude any possible semblance of collusion. They were water-jars, not wine-vessels, so that none could say that very probably there was a residue or sediment of wine remaining in them, which lent a flavor to water poured on it, and so formed a thinnest kind of wine—even as the same is witnessed against in the praise which the ruler of the feast bestows upon the new supply. (ver. 10.) The fact of these vessels being at hand is no less accounted for: it was not by any premeditated plan, but they were there in accordance with the customs and traditionary observances of the Jews in the matter of washing; for this seems more probable than that this “*purifying*” has reference to any distinctly commanded legal observances. The purifying was such as the Jewish doctors had enjoined and made necessary. (Matt. xv. 2; Mark vii. 2—4; Luke xi. 39.) The quantity, too, which these vessels contained, was enormous—not such as might have been brought in unobserved; but each of these water-pots contained “*two or three firkins apiece.*” And at the beginning they were empty; so that the servants who, in obedience to the commandment, had filled the water-pots with water, and who knew what liquid they had poured in, were themselves, by this very work which they had done, witnesses of the reality of the miracle. Else it might only have appeared, as in fact it did only appear to the ruler of the feast, that the wine came from some unexpected quarter; “*He knew not whence it was, but the servants which drew the water,*”†—that is, not the water now made wine, but who *had drawn* the simpler element, which Christ chose to use as the substratum on which he should afterwards exercise his miraculous powers, “*knew.*”

Like most other acts of creation, or more strictly, of becoming, this of the water becoming wine, is withdrawn from sight, and that which is poured into the jars as water is drawn out as wine; but the actual process of the change we labor in vain to conceive. And yet in truth it is in no way stranger, save in the rapidity with which it is effected, than that which is every day going forward among us, but to which use and custom have so dulled our eyes, that commonly we do not marvel at all:

\* *Hom. 22 in Joh.*

† The Vulgate rightly, Qui hauserant. De Wette: Welche das Wasser geschöpft hatten. So the Ambrosian Hymn:

Vel hydriis plenis aquæ  
Vini saporem infuderis,  
Hæusit minister conscius  
Quod ipse non impleverat.



and because we can call it by its name, suppose that we have discovered its secret. He who does every year prepare the wine in the grape, causing it to drink up and expand with the moisture of earth and heaven, to take this up into itself, and transmute into its own nobler juices, did now gather together all those his slower processes into the act of a single moment, and accomplish in an instant what ordinarily he does not accomplish but in many months. This analogy does not indeed help us to understand what the Lord did now, but yet brings before us that in this he was working in the line of (above, indeed, but not across, or counter to,) his more ordinary workings, which we see daily around us, the unnoticed miracle of every-day nature. That which this had of its own peculiar, and taking it out from the order of these, was the power and will by which all the intervening steps of these tardier processes were overleaped, and the result obtained at once.\*

It has been sometimes debated whether "*the ruler of the feast*" was himself one of the guests, who either by general consent or the selection of the host was set over the banquet; or a chief attendant only, charged with ordering the course of the feast, and overlooking the ministrations of the inferior servants. This last is the view taken by Chrysostom and others;† but the analogy of Greek and Roman usages‡ seems rather to point him out as himself one of the invited guests, who was invested with this office for the time; and the passage from the Son of Sirach quoted below,§ shows that a like custom was in use among the Jews. Indeed

\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh., Tract. 8*): Ipse enim fecit vinum illo die in nuptiis in sex illis hydriis quas impleri aquâ præcepit, qui omni anno facit hoc in vitibus. Sicut enim quod miserunt ministri in hydriis, in vinum conversum est opere Domini, sic et quod nubes fundunt, in vinum convertitur ejusdem opere Domini. Illud autem non miramur, quia omni anno fit: assiduitate amisit admirationem. And again (*Serm. 123, c. 3*): Quæ aqua erat, vinum factum viderunt homines et obstupuerunt. Quid aliud fit de pluvia per radicem vitis? Ipse illa fecit, ipse ista; illa ut pascaris, ista ut mireris. So also *De Gen. ad Litt.*, l. 6, c. 13. Chrysostom (*Hom. 22 in Joh.*): Δεικνὺς ὅτι αὐτὸς ἴσται ὁ ἐν ταῖς ἀμπέλοις τὸ ἕδωρον μεταβάλλων, καὶ τὸν ἕτερον διὰ τῆς ῥίζης εἰς οἶνον τρέπων, ὅτι οὐκ ἐν τῷ φυτόνι διὰ πολλοῦ χρόνου γίνεται, τοῦτο ἀθρόον ἐν τῷ γάμῳ εἰσγόραστο. Cf. Gregory the Great, *Moral.*, l. 6, c. 15.

† So by Severus; by Juvenus, who calls him summum ministrum; by Kuinoel, and others.

‡ This ἀρχιτρίκλιος will then answer very much to the συμποσιάρχης among the Greeks, and the rex convivii, or magister convivii, or modimperator, of the Romans. It was his part, in the words of Plato, παιδαγωγεῖν συμπόσιον. (BECKER'S *Charicles*, v. 1, p. 465.) He appears here as the προγέστης. The word ἀρχιτρίκλιος is late, and of rare occurrence; Petronius has triclinarches.

§ Sirac. xxxii. 1, 2: "If thou be made the master of a feast (ηγούμενος), lift not thyself up, but be among them as one of the rest; take diligent care of them, and so sit down. And when thou hast done all thy office, take thy place, that thou mayest be merry with them, and receive a crown for thy well ordering of the feast."

the freedom of remonstrance which he allows himself with the host seems almost decisive of his position; for such would hardly have found place but from an equal. To him, as having the function of tasting and distributing the wine, the Lord commanded that which he had made to be brought, even in this little matter recognizing and honoring the established order and usages of society, and giving to every man his due. And now "*when the ruler of the feast had tasted the water which was made wine, and knew not whence it was, he called the bridegroom,*" we need not suppose actually summoned him from his place, but he called to him,\* with something of a festive exclamation, not unsuitable to the season, "*Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and who men have well drunk, then that which is worse: † but thou hast kept the good wine until now.*"

Many interpreters have been very anxious to rescue the original word, which we have given by "*well drunk,*" from involving aught of excess, as though, did it imply that, we must necessarily conclude that the guests at this marriage festival had already drunken too much, that this was one of the *temulenta* convivia, which St. Cyprian speaks of as too often disgracing a marriage, ‡ with all the difficulties, of Christ being present at such an abuse of God's gifts, and, stranger still, ministering by his divine power to a yet further excess. But there is no need of such anxious dealing with the word. § The ruler of the feast is but alluding to the corrupt customs and fashions too current among men, not to aught which was necessarily going on before his eyes—nay, to something which certainly was not so, for such the Lord would have as little sanctioned by his presence, as he would have helped it forward by a wonder-work of his own. The speaker does no more than refer to a common practice, and in so doing, notices its cause, namely, that men's palates after a while are blunted, and their power of discerning between good and bad lost; and that then an inferior wine passes current with them, as it would not have done before. There is no special application

\* Maldonatus: Non quod ad se venire jussisset, quod minimè fuisset urbanum, sed quod recumbentem appellans interrogaverit, quid optimum vinum in finem reservasset.

† *Evangelio* implies at once worse and weaker. We have in English the same use of "small." Perhaps "poorer" would be the nearest word. Pliny in like manner (*II. N.*, l. 14, c. 14.) speaks of the meanness of some, qui convivis alia quam sibi met ipsis ministrant, aut *procedente mensâ* subjiciunt.

‡ *De Hab. Virg.*, c. 3.

§ Augustine indeed goes further than any, for he makes not merely the guests, but the ruler of the feast himself to have "*well drunk*" indeed. The Lord not merely made wine, but, he adds (*De Gen. ad Litt.*, l. 6, c. 13) tale vinum, quod *ebrius* etiam conviva laudaret.

to the guests present—except in the minds of them who would mar, if by any means they could, the image of a perfect Holiness, which offends and rebukes them.

Of a piece with this is their miserable objection, who find the miracle incredible, since, if the Lord did not actually minister to an excess already commenced, yet, by the creation of “so large and perilous a quantity of wine,” (for the quantity *was* enormous,\*) he would have put temptation in men’s way;—as though the secret of temperance lay in the scanty supply, and not in the strong self-restraint! In like manner, every gift of God, every large abundance of the vineyard, might be said with equal truth to be a temptation, and so in some sort it is, (compare Luke xii. 16,) a proving of men’s temperance and moderation in the midst of abundance.† But man is to be perfected, not by being kept *out of* temptation, but rather by being victorious *in* temptation. And for this large giving, it was only that which we should look for. He, a King, gave as a king. No niggard giver in the ordinary bounties of his kingdom of nature, neither was he a niggard giver now, when he brought those his common gifts into the kingdom of his grace, and made them directly to serve him there. (Cf. Luke v. 6, 7.)

But these words, “*Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now,*” setting forth, as in the letter they do, only a trivial practice of a poor worldly economy, have oftentimes had a higher meaning found for them. It has been excellently noticed how these very words may be used for the setting forth the difference between the manner and order of the world’s giving and of Christ’s giving. The man, not knowing what he did, gave utterance to a far larger and deeper thought than he meant. The world does indeed give its best and its fairest at the beginning, its “*good wine*” first, but has only baser substitutes at the last. “*When men have well drunk,*” when their spiritual

\* The Attic *μετρητής* (=βάδος=72 *ξίσται*=72 sextarii) = 8 gallons 7·365 pints, imperial measure; so that each of these six vessels, containing two or three *μητροται* apiece, did in round numbers hold about twenty gallons or more.

† Calvin answers the objection excellently well: *Nostro vitio fit, si ejus benignitas irritamentum est luxuriæ; quin potius hæc temperantiæ nostræ vera est probatio, si in mediâ affluentâ parci tamen et moderati sumus.* Cf. *SUICER’S Thess.*, s. v. *οἶνος*. It is instructive to notice the ascetic tone which Strauss takes, (*Leben Jesu*, v. 2, p. 229,) when speaking of this *Luxuswunder*, as he terms it, contrasted with that which he assumes when he desires to depreciate the character of John the Baptist; but truly he is of that generation that call Jesus a winebibber, and say that John has a devil; with whom that which is godlike can in no form find favor. Some of Woolston’s vilest ribaldry (*Fourth Discourse on the Miracles of our Saviour*, p. 23, seq.) is spent upon this theme.

palate is blunted, when they have lost the discernment between moral good and evil, then it puts upon them what it would not have dared to offer at the first—coarser pleasures, viler enjoyments, the swine's husks. The world is for them that worship it, even as that great image which the Babylonian king beheld; (Dan. ii. 31;) its head, indeed, may show as fine gold, but its material grows ever coarser, till it finishes in the iron and clay at the last. And so it comes to pass that

“To be a prodigal's favorite, then, worse lot!  
A miser's pensioner;”

this is the portion of them that have entered on the service of sin and of the world. But it is very otherwise with the guests of Christ, the heavenly bridegroom. He ever reserves for them whom *he* has bidden “*the good wine*” unto the last.\* In the words of the most eloquent of our divines, “The world presents us with fair language, promising hopes, convenient fortunes, pompous honors, and these are the outside of the bowl; but when it is swallowed, these dissolve in an instant, and there remains bitterness and the malignity of coloquintida. Every sin smiles in the first address, and carries light in the face, and honey in the lip, but when we ‘*have well drunk*,’ then comes ‘*that which is worse*,’ a whip with six strings, fears and terrors of conscience, and shame and displeasure, and a caitiff disposition, and diffidence in the day of death. But when after the manner of purifying of the Christians, we fill our water-pots with water, watering our couch with our tears, and moistening our cheeks with the perpetual distillations of repentance, then Christ turns our water into wine, first penitents and then communicants—first waters

\* Thus H. de Sto Victore (*De Arc. Morali*, l. 1. c. 1). Omnis namque homo, id est, carnalis primum vinum bonum ponit, quia in sua delectatione falsam quandam dulcedinem sentit; sed postquam furor mali desiderii mentem inebriaverit, tunc quod deterius est propinat, quia spina conscientiae superveniens mentem, quam prius falso delectabat, graviter erueciat. Sed Sponsus noster postremo vinum bonum porrigit, dum mentem, quam sui dulcedine amoris replere disponit, quaedam prius tribulationum compunctione amaricari sinit, ut post gustum amaritudinis avidius bibatur suavissimum poculum caritatis. Corn. à Lapide: Hic est typos fallaciae mundi, qui initio res speciosas oculis objicit, deinde sub iis deteriores et viles inducit, itaque sui amatores decipit et illudit. An unknown author (BERNARDI *Opp.*, v. 2, p. 513): In futura enim vita aqua omnis laboris et actionis terrene in vinum divinae contemplationis commutabitur, implebunturque omnis hydriae usque ad summum. Omnes enim implebuntur in bonis domus Domini, cum illae desiderabiles nuptiae Sponsi et sponsae celebrabuntur: bibenturque in summa letitia omnium clamantium Domino et dicentium; Tu bonum vinum servasti usque adhuc. I know not from whence this line comes,

Ille merum tardè, dat tamen ille merum;

but it evidently belongs to this miracle.

of sorrow and then the wine of the chalice ; . . . . for Jesus keeps the best wine to the last, not only because of the direct reservation of the highest joys till the nearer approaches of glory, but also because our relishes are higher after a long fruition than at the first essays, such being the nature of grace, that it increases in relish as it does in fruition, every part of grace being new duty and new reward.”\*

The Evangelist expressly, and, as it would seem, pointedly, excludes from all historic credit the miracles of Christ’s infancy, of which so large a crop is to be found in nearly all the apocryphal Gospels. For, of course, he would not say merely that this was the first miracle which Jesus did in Cana, but that this miracle in Cana was the first which he did ; it was for him the “*beginning of miracles.*”† The statement is not unimportant, nor unconnected with one of the main purposes with which the Gospel of St. John was written, which was to repel and remove all unreal notions concerning the person of his Lord,—notions which nothing would have helped more to uphold than those merely phantastic and capricious miracles,—favorites, therefore, with all manner of Docetic heretics,—which are ascribed to his infancy.‡

But in this work of his he “*manifested forth his glory,*” words that could be used of no lesser than the Son ; for all others would have manifested forth the glory of another, but he his own. And this, because the word “*glory*” is to be taken emphatically ; it is not merely his excellent greatness, but his divinity : for the glory (δόξα) is a divine attribute ; it is comprehended and involved in the idea of the Logos as the absolute Light : as such he rays forth light from himself, and this effluence is “*his glory.*” (John i. 14 ; Matt. xvi. 27 ; Mark viii. 38.) This “*glory*” during the time that the Son of God sojourned upon earth, for the most part was hidden ; the covering of the flesh concealed it from men’s

\* J. TAYLOR, *Life of Christ*. With this may be fitly joined that exquisite poem, with which every one is familiar, in *The Christian Year*, that upon the second Sunday after Epiphany, suggested by this miracle, the Gospel of that day, and which is the unfolding of the same thought.

† Thus Tertullian (*De Bapt.*, c. 9,) calls it, *prima rudimenta potestatis suæ*. And this day has been called *Dies natalis virtutum Domini*.

‡ This statement of St. John has ever been used in the Church as a decisive testimony exclusive of all these ; thus by Epiphanius, (*Her.*, 51, § 20), from whose words it would appear that some Catholics were inclined to admit these miracles of the Infancy, as affording an argument against the Corinthians, and in proof that it was not at his baptism first that the Christ was united to the man Jesus. And Euthymius (*in loc.*) finds in St. John’s words a distinct purpose on the part of the Evangelist to exclude all wonders that were recorded as going before. St. John, he says, *ιστόρησεν αὐτὸ, χρησιμεύον εἰς τὸ μὴ πιστεύειν τοῖς λεγομένοις παιδικοῖς θαύμασι τοῦ Χριστοῦ*. Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Hom.* 16 ; 20 ; 22 *in Joh.* ; and THELO, *Cod. Apocryph.*, p. lxxxiv. seq.

eyes: but in this miracle, this work of his power, St. John would say, it broke through this its fleshly covering, and manifested itself to the spiritual eyes of his disciples; they "beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."\* And as a consequence, "*his disciples believed on him.*" The work, besides its more immediate purpose, had a further end and aim, the confirming their faith, who already believing in him, were therefore the more capable of receiving increase of faith,—of being lifted from faith to faith, from faith in an earthly teacher to faith in a heavenly Lord.†

It was said at the outset, that this first miracle of our Lord's had its inner mystical meaning. The first miracle of Moses was the turning of water into blood, (Exod. vii. 20,) and that had its own fitness, for the law was a ministration of death and working wrath;‡ but the first

\* The Eastern Church, as is well known, counted the Baptism of Christ, being his recognition before men and by men in his divine character, for the great manifesting of his glory to the world, for his *Epiphany*, and was wont to celebrate it as such. But the Western, which laid not such stress on the Baptism, saw his Epiphany rather in the adoration of the Magians, the first fruits and representatives of the heathen world. At a later period, indeed, it placed other great moments in his life, moments in which his divine majesty gloriously shone out, in connection with this festival; such, for instance, as the Baptism, as the feeding of the five thousand, and as this present miracle, which last continually affords the theme to the later writers of the Western Church for the homily at Epiphany, as it gives *us* the Gospel for one of the Epiphany Sundays. But these secondary allusions belong not to the first introduction of the feast, so that the following passage should have prevented the editors of the new volume of St. Augustine's sermons (*Serm. Inediti*, Paris, 1842,) from attributing the sermon which contains it (*Serm. 38, in Epiph.*) to that Father: *Hodiernam diem Ecclesia per orbem celebrat totum, sive quod stella præ ceteris fulgens divitibus Magis parvum non parvi Regis monstravit hospitium, sive quod hodie Christus primum fecisse dicitur signum, quando aquas repente commutavit in vinum, sive quod à Joanne isto die creditur baptizatus et Patris consonâ voce Dei filius revelatur.* The same mark of a later origin is about several other sermons which they have printed as his. In his genuine, he knows *only* of the adoration of the wise men as the fact which this festival of the Epiphany commemorates.

† This is plainly the true explanation (in the words of Ammonius, *προσθήκη ἐκείνων τῶν τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεῖας*;) and not that, which Augustine, (*De Cons. Evang.*, l. 2, c. 17) for the interests of his harmony, upholds, that they are here called "*disciples*" by anticipation; because subsequently to the miracle they believed; (non jam discipulos, sed qui futuri erant discipuli intelligere debemus;) as one might say, The *apostle* Paul was born at Tarsus.

‡ Yet as Moses has here, where he stands in contrast to Christ, a mutatio in deterius, so in another place, where he stands as his type, he has, like him, a mutatio in melius, (Exod. xiv. 25.) changing the bitter waters to sweet: and so not less Elisha (2 Kin. ii. 19—22); however the more excellent transmutation, which should be not merely the rectifying of qualities already existing, but imparting of new qualities, was reserved for

miracle of Christ was the turning of water into wine, and this too was a meet inauguration of the rest, for his was a ministration of life; he came, bringing joy and gladness, the giver of the true wine that maketh glad the hearts of men.—There is, too, another prophetic aspect under which this turning of the water into wine has been often contemplated, another, though in truth but a different aspect of the same,—that even so should Christ turn the poorer dispensation, the weak and watery elements of the Jewish religion, (Heb. vii. 18,) into richer and nobler, the gladdening wine of a higher faith. The whole Jewish dispensation in its comparative weakness and poverty was aptly symbolized by the water, and only in type and prophecy could it tell of him of the tribe of Judah, who should come “binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass’s colt unto the choice vine;” of whom it is said, “he washed his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes” (Gen. xlix. 11; cf. John xv. 1); but now by this work of his he gave token that he had indeed come into the midst of his people, that their joy might be full.\*

the Son; who was indeed not an ameliorator of the old life of men, but the bringer in of a new life—not a reformer, but a regenerator.

\* Corn. à Lapide: Christus ergo initio suæ prædicationis mutans aquam in vinum significabat se legem Mosaicam, instar aquæ insipidam et frigidam, conversurum in Evangelium gratiæ, quæ instar vini est, generosa, sapida, ardens, et efficax. And Bernard, in a pre-eminently beautiful sermon upon this miracle, (Bened. Ed., p. 814,) has in fact the same interpretation: Tunc [aqua] mutatur in vinum, cum timor expellitur à caritate, et implentur omnia fervore spiritûs et jucundâ devotione; cf. *De Divers.*, *Serm.* 18, c. 2; and Eusebius (*Dem. Erang.* l. 9, c. 8); Σάμβουλον ἦν τὸ παραδοξὸν μυστικωτέρου κράματος, μεταβληθέντος ἐκ τῆς σωματικώτερας ἐπὶ τὴν νοερὰν καὶ πνευματικὴν ἐφόρουσίνην τοῦ πιστικοῦ τῆς καινῆς Διαθήκης κράματος. Augustine is in the same line, when he says (*In Ev. Joh.*, *Tract.* 9): Tollitur velamen, cum transieris ad Dominum, . . . et quod aqua erat, vinum tibi fit. Lege libros omnes propheticos, non intellecto Christo, quid tam insipidum et fatuum invenies? Intellige ibi Christum, non solum sapit quod legis, sed etiam inebriat. He illustrates this from Luke xxiv. 25—27. Gregory the Great, (*Hom.* 6 in *Ezek.*), gives it another turn: Aquam nobis in vinum vertit, quando ipsa historia per allegoriæ mysterium, in spiritalem nobis intelligentiam commutatur.—Before the rise of the Eutychian heresy had made it clearly unadvisable to use such terms as *κράσις*, *ἀνάκρασις*, *μίξις*, to designate the union of the two natures in Christ, or such phrases as Tertullian’s *Deo mixtus homo*, we sometimes find allusions to what Christ here did, as though it were symbolical of the ennobling of the human nature through its being transfused by the divine in his person. Thus Irenæus (l. 5, c. 1, § 3) complains of the Ebionites, that they cling to the first Adam who was cast out of Paradise, and will know nothing of the second, its restorer: Reprobant itaque hi commixtionem vini cœlestis, et solam aquam secularem volunt esse. So Dörner (*Von der Person Christi*, p. 57), understands this passage: yet it is possible that here may be allusion rather to their characteristic custom of using water alone, instead of wine mingled with water, in the Holy Communion: the passage will even then show how Irenæus found in the wine and in the water, the apt symbols of the higher and the lower, of the divine and human.

And apart from all that is local and temporary, this miracle may be taken as the sign and symbol of all which Christ is evermore doing in the world, ennobling all that he touches, making saints out of sinners, angels out of men, and in the end heaven out of earth, a new paradise of God out of the old wilderness of the world. For the prophecy of the world's regeneration, of the day in which his disciples shall drink of the fruit of the vine new in his kingdom, is eminently here ;—in this humble feast, the rudiments of the great festival which shall be at the open setting up of his kingdom—that marriage festival in which he shall be himself the Bridegroom and his Church the bride,—that season when his “*hour*” shall have indeed “*come*.”

Ironæus\* has an interesting passage, in which he puts together this miracle and that of the loaves, and, as I think, contemplates them together as a prophecy of the Eucharist, but certainly sees them as alike witnesses against all Gnostic notions of a creation originally impure. The Lord, he says, might have created with no subjacent material the wine with which he cheered these guests, the bread with which he fed those multitudes ; but he rather chose to take his Father's creatures on which to put forth his power, in witness that it was the same God who at the beginning had made the waters and caused the earth to bear its fruits, who did in those last days give by his Son the cup of blessing and the bread of heaven.†

\* *Con. Hæc.*, l. 3, c. 11 ; Chrysostom in like manner, in regard to the Manichæans, *Hom.* 22 in *Joh.*

† The account of this miracle by Sedulius is a favorable specimen of his poetry ;

Prima sua Dominus thalamis dignatus adesce  
 Virtutis documenta dedit ; convivaque præsens  
 Pascere non pasci veniens, mirabile ! fusas  
 In vinum convertit aquas ; dimittere gaudent  
 Pallorem latices ; mutavit læsa [læta ?] saporem  
 Unda snum, largita merum, mensasque per omnes  
 Dulcia non nato rubuerunt pœcula musto.  
 Implevit sex ergo læus hoc nectare Christus,  
 Quippe ferax qui Vitis erat, virtute colonâ  
 Omnia fructificans, ejus sub tegmine blando  
 Mitis innocidas enutrit pampinus uvas.

In very early times it was a favorite subject for Christian art. On many of the old sarcophagi Jesus is seen standing and touching with the rod of Moses, the rod of might which is generally placed in his hand when he is set forth as a worker of wonders, three vessels resting on the ground,—three, because in their skillless delineations the artists could not manage to find room for more. Sometimes he has a roll of writing in his hand, as much as to say, ‘This is written in the Scripture ; or the master of the feast is somewhat earnestly rebuking the bridegroom for having kept the good wine till last ; having himself tasted, he is giving him the cup to convince him of his error. (MÜNTER, *Sinnbild. d. Alt. Christ.*, v. 2, p. 92.)



## II.

### THE HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.

JOHN iv. 46—54.

THERE is an apparent contradiction in the words that introduce this miracle. It is there said that Jesus "went into Galilee, *for* he himself testified that a prophet hath no honor in his own country," and yet Galilee *was* his own country, and immediately after we are told that the Galilæans "received,"\* or gave him honorable welcome. This however is easily got rid of; yet not as Tittmann, and some of the older expositors propose, by making St. John, in fact, to say that the Lord went into Galilee, *though* he had testified that a prophet was unhonored at home; for there is no compelling the words to mean this; nor yet by understanding "his own country" as Judæa, and then finding in this saying of his an explanation of his retiring from thence into Galilee. This is Origen's explanation, whom some moderns follow. But the Lord's birth at Bethlehem in Judæa being a fact not generally known, the slight esteem in which he was there held, could not have had in this its ground. Rather we must accept "country"† as the place where he had been brought up, namely, Nazareth, and then there is here an explanation of his not returning thither, (with a direct allusion to the testimony which he himself had borne in its synagogue, "No prophet is accepted in his own country," Luke iv. 24,) but going in preference to Cana, and other cities of Galilee; "and the

\* Ἐδέξαντο, Benevolè et honorificè exceperunt : so often elsewhere.

† Πατρις, cf. Matt. xiii. 54, 55; Mark vi. 1, 4; Luke iv. 16. Chrysostom (*Hom. 35 in Joh.*) has this right view of the meaning, with the exception, indeed, of understanding by "his own country," Capernaum (Luke x. 15.) rather than Nazareth; ἐμαρτύρησε will then have the sense of a plusq. perf., of which there are several instances in the New Testament.

Galilæans," as St. John, with an emphasis, relates, "received him," though the Nazarenes, the people of his own immediate city, had rejected, and would have killed him.\*

In treating of this miracle, the first question which occurs is this, namely, whether we have here the same history as that of the servant (παῖς) of the centurion related by St. Matthew (viii. 5), and St. Luke (vii. 2), and here repeated with only immaterial variations. Irenæus† would seem to have looked at them as one and the same history; and Chrysostom and others note such an opinion as held by some in their time, though they themselves oppose it. And this rightly, for there is almost nothing in its favor. Not merely the external circumstances are greatly different; that centurion being a heathen, this nobleman‡ in every probability a Jew; that one pleading for his servant, this for his son; that intercession finding place as the Lord was entering Caper-

\* There is another view of the passage possible, namely that St. John, recording (ver. 43) Christ's return to Galilee, is explaining why he should have first left it, (ver. 41,) and why he should have returned to it now (ver. 45.) He left it, because as he had himself testified, (ἐμαρτύρησε, a first aorist for a plusq. perfect,) a prophet is unhonored in his own country, but he returned to it now, because his countrymen, the Galilæans, having seen the signs that he did at Jerusalem, were prepared to welcome, and did welcome him, in quite another spirit from that which they manifested at his first appearance; "So (ver. 46,) Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee." This is Neander's explanation (*Leben Jesu*, p. 385,) and Jacobi's, in the *Theol. Stud. und Krit.*, 1836, p. 906.

† *Con. Har.*, l. 2, c. 22. *Filium Centurionis absens verbo curavit dicens, Vade, filius tuus vivit.* Yet *Centurionis* may well be only a slip of the pen or the memory. In modern times only Semler that I know, has held the same opinion.

‡ The term βασιλικός tells rather against that view; since it is little probable that any military officer is denoted by it. The exact meaning of the word here never can be exactly fixed; even Chrysostom (*Hom. 35 in Joh.*) speaks uncertainly about it, and only suggests a meaning; showing that even in his day it was not to be explained by the familiar usage of them with whom Greek was a living language. Three meanings have been offered. Either by the βασιλικός is meant one of those that were of the king's party, the royalists, in which case the term would be much the same as Herodian, designating one of those that sided with the faction of the Herods, father and son, and helped to maintain them on the throne (Lightfoot); or, with something of a narrower signification, the βασιλικός may be one especially attached to the court, aulicus, or as Jerome (*In Esai.* 65,) calls this man, palatinus (Regulus qui Græce dicitur βασιλικός, quem nos de aulâ regiâ rectius interpretari possumus palatinum); thus in the margin of our Bibles it is "courtier;" or else, though this seems here the least probable supposition, βασιλικός may mean one of royal blood; so in Lucian the word is four times applied to those who are actually kings, or are related to them. Perhaps no better term could be found than that of our English version, "*nobleman*," which has something of the doubtfulness of the original expression, and while it does not require, yet does not deny, that he was of royal blood.

naum, this in Cana; in that the petitioner sending by others, in this himself coming: the sickness there a paralysis, a fever here. But far more than all this, the heart and inner kernel of the two narratives is different. That centurion is an example of a strong faith, this nobleman of a weak faith; that centurion counts that, if Jesus will but speak the word, his servant will be healed, while this nobleman is so earnest that the Lord should come down, because in heart he limits his power, and counts that nothing but his actual presence will avail to heal his sick; the other receives praise, this rebuke, at the lips of Christ. The difference is indeed here so striking, that Augustine\* draws a comparison, by way of contrast, between the faith of that centurion, and the unbelief of this nobleman.

Against all this, the points of apparent identity are very slight, as the near death of the sufferer, the healing at a distance and by a word, and the returning and finding him healed. It is nothing strange that two miracles should have these circumstances in common.

It has been supposed by some† that this nobleman is no other than Chuza, Herod's steward, whose wife was among the holy women that ministered unto the Lord of their substance (Luke viii. 3; cf. ver. 53). This is not wholly improbable; for it would seem as if only some mighty and marvellous work of this kind would have drawn a steward of Herod's with his family, into the net of the Gospel. But whether this was so or not, he leaving his son exceeding sick at Capernaum, now came and found Jesus, who was just returned from his journey to Jerusalem, in Cana of Galilee, "*and besought him that he would come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.*" From the something of severity which comes out in our Lord's first notice of his petition, "*Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.,*"‡ it is evident that

\* *In Ev. Joh., Tract. 16*; Videte distinctionem. Regulus iste Dominum ad domum suam descendere cupiebat; ille Centurio indignum se esse dicebat. Illi dicebatur, Ego veniam, et curabo eum: huic dictum est, Vade, filius tuus vivit. Illi præsentiam promittebat, hunc verbo sanabat. Iste tamen præsentiam ejus extorquebat, ille se præsentiam ejus indignum esse dicebat. Hic cessum est elationi; illic concessum est humilitati. Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Hom. 35 in Joh.*

† Lightfoot, Chemnitz, and others.

‡ This passage, with that other in which the Lord declines to give a sign to some that asked it, dismissing them to the sign of Jonah, (Matt. xii. 38—40; xvi. 1—4,) are favorite passages with those who deny that he laid any especial stress on his miracles, as proving any thing concerning him; that other has been stretched so far by some as to be brought in proof that he did not even *claim* to do any. Thus by the modern rationalists, though the abuse of the passage is as old as Aquinas, who takes note of and rebukes it. But our Lord's words have not any such meaning, and it may be worth while to show how far they are from bearing out any such conclusion. The

this nobleman was one driven to Jesus by the strong constraint of an outward need, a need which no other but he could supply, (Isai. xxvi. 16,) rather than one drawn by the inner necessities and desires of his soul;—a man who would not have come but for this;\* who shared in the carnal temper of the most of his fellow-countrymen (they, by the plural number which our Lord here uses, being, it is most probable, intended to be included in the same condemnation);—one who had (as yet, at least,) no organ for perceiving the glory of Christ as it shone out in his person and in his doctrine,—whom nothing but miracles, “*signs and wonders,*” would compel to a belief; unlike those Samaritans whom the Lord had just left, and who, without a miracle, had in great numbers “believed because of his word.” (John iv. 41.) But “the Jews require a sign,” (1 Cor. i. 22,) and this one, in the smallness of his present faith, straitened and limited the power of the Lord, counting it needful that he should “*come down*”† if his son was to be healed; being unable to conceive of any other cure, of any word spoken at a

Lord says, There shall no sign be given to *them*, the men who out of an unbelieving heart asked one, the same who but a little before had ascribed his miracles to Beelzebub. (Matt. xii. 24.) “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah,”—not, that is, to that evil and adulterous generation. The only sign for it is the appearance in the midst of it, of a warning prophet, a prophet of woe, a second and greater Jonah, with his burden of near judgment, proclaiming that in forty years shall Jerusalem be destroyed: the same being sealed by the wondrous circumstances of his life, by his resurrection, as Jonah by his deliverance from the whale’s belly, to be indeed the commissioned of the Lord. Christ does not deny the value of the miracle, or say that he will do none; but only that he will do none *for them*, for an evil and adulterous generation which is seeking not after helps and confirmations of faith, but excuses and subterfuges for unbelief. These works of grace and power are reserved for those who are receptive of impressions from them. They are seals which are to seal softened hearts; hearts utterly cold and hard would take no impression from them, and therefore will not be tried with them. So that this is not, in fact, a slight put upon miracles, but an honoring of them. There are those upon whom they shall not be wasted.

\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh., Tract. 16.*) reads the words of Christ as implying that this nobleman did not believe that Christ could do this very thing which he was asking of him. It was but a tentative request: in the utter lack of help any where, he snatched at what seemed to him, even while he was snatching at it, but as a straw, and so he received this rebuke: *Arguit hominem in fide tepidum aut frigidum, aut omnino nullius fidei: sed tentare cupientem de sanitate filii sui, qualis esset Christus, quis esset, quantum posset. Verba enim rogantis audivimus, cor diffidentis non videmus; sed ille pronuntiavit, qui et verba audivit, et cor inspexit.* Yet the earnestness of the man’s rejoinder, “*Sir, come down ere my son die,*” is very unlike this.

† Gregory the Great (*Hom. 28 in Evang.*): *Minus itaque in illum credidit, quem non putavit posse salutem dare, nisi præsens esset in corpore.*

distance and yet mighty to save.\* Not that we are to suppose that the Lord thus speaking meant to cast any slight on the significance of miracles, only they are not to serve for this, namely, to compel the reluctant and unbelieving to the faith, but to confirm the mission of a divine ambassador before them that have already been taken hold of by the power of the truth.

Yet, as Bengel observes, there is a beautiful admixture in this answer, of rebuke and encouragement; an implied promise of a miracle, even while the man is blamed, that he needed this, that nothing short of this would induce him to put his trust in the Lord of life.† And so the man accepts it; for he does not suffer himself to be repelled by this word of a seeming, and indeed of a real severity; rather he now presses on the more earnestly, “*Sir, come down‡ ere my child die;*”—still, it is true, not guessing of any other help save through the Lord’s bodily presence; still far off from the faith and humility of that centurion, who said, “*Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed;*”—much less dreaming of a power that could raise the dead; it must be “*ere my child die,*” or the help will be too late. Therefore that gracious Lord, who had always the higher good of those who came in contact with him in his eye, again tries his faith, and in the trying strengthens it, sending him away with a mere word of assurance that it should go well with his child; “*Go thy way, thy son liveth.*” And the nobleman was contented with that assurance; he “*believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way,*” expecting to find that it should be done according to that word.

There is here again something to be learned by a comparison of the Lord’s dealing with this man and with the centurion of the other Gospels. Here being entreated to come, he does not, but sends his healing word. There, being asked to speak that word of healing, he rather proposes himself to come; for here, as Chrysostom, unfolding the motives of his different conduct in the two instances, well brings out, a

\* Bengel will have this to be the especial point of the whole answer, laying the entire emphasis thus: “*Exceperit ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe:*” *Innuvit Jesus se etiam absentis reguli filio posse vitam dare; et postulat ut regulus id credat, neque perfectionem Jesu postulet suscipiendam cum ipso sanationem apud lectulum visuro.* Others have done the same: see KÖCHER’S *Analecta* (*in loc.*)

† *Simul autem miraculum promittitur, fidesque prius etiam desideratur, et dum desideratur, excitatur.* Responsum externâ quâdam repulsæ specie et tacitâ opis promissione mixtum, congruit sensui rogantis ex fide et imbecillitate mixto.

‡ *Κατὰβηθη, Capernaum lying upon the shore, and lower than Cana, where now they were.*

narrow and poor faith is enlarged and deepened, there a strong faith is crowned and rewarded. By not going he increases this nobleman's faith; by offering to go, he brings out and honors that centurion's humility. Nor shall we fail to observe by the difference of his conduct in the two cases how far was the Lord from being an acceptor of persons. He will not come, but only send, to the son of this nobleman (see 2 Kin. v. 10, 11); he is prompt to visit in his own person the servant of that centurion.\*

It would seem that now his confidence in Christ's word was so great, that he proceeded leisurely homewards, since it was not till the next day that he reached his house, though the distance between the two cities was not so great that the journey need have occupied many hours. Maldonatus quotes Isai. xxviii. 16, "He that believeth shall not make haste." It is worthy of note that his inquiry of the servants who met him on his return with news of his child's recovery, was when the child "began to amend," † to be a little better. For at the height of his faith, the father had only looked for a slow and gradual amendment, and therefore he used such an expression as this: but his servants answer, that at such an hour, ‡ the very hour when Jesus spake the word, the fever not merely began to subside, there was not merely a turning point in the disease, but it "left him," § it suddenly forsook him. || "So the father knew that it was at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him Thy son liveth, and himself believed;"—this he did for all the benefits which the Lord had bestowed on him, he accepted another and the crowning benefit, even the cup of salvation; and not he alone, but, as so often happened, and this for the bringing us into the perception of the manner in which each smaller community, as well as the great community of mankind,—a nation, or as in this case a family, is united and bound together under its federal head, his conversion drew after it that

\* Thus the *Opus Imperf. in Matt., Hom.* 22: *Illum ergo contempsit, quem dignitas sublevabat regalis; istum autem honoravit, quem conditio humiliabat servilis.*

† Κορψότερον ἔσχε = meliusculè se habuit. Κορψός from κομῖω,—so in Latin, *comptus*, for adorned in any way. Thus in Arrian, (*Diss. Epict.*, 3, 10,) κορψός ἔχεις, (*belle habes*, Cicero,) are the words of the physician to his patient that is getting better.

‡ A beautiful remark of Bengel's: *Quo curatius divina opera et beneficia considerantur, eo plus nutrimenti fides acquirit.*

§ Ammonius (*in Catena*): Οὐ γὰρ ἀπλῶς, οὐδὲ ὡς ἔτυχεν, ἀπηλλάγη τῆς ἀσθενείας τὸ παιδίον ἀλλ' ἀθρόον ὡς φαίνεται μὴ φησείως ἀκόλουθίαν εἶναι τοῦ θαύματος, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

|| So it was plainly in the case of Simon's wife's mother; for at Christ's word "immediately she arose and ministered unto them," (Luke iv. 39,) and there exactly the same phrase (*ἀφῆκεν αὐτήν*) is used.

of all who belonged to him: "*himself believed, and his whole house.*" (Cf. Acts xvi. 15, 34 : xviii. 8.)\*

Yet, might it not be asked, Did he not believe before? was not the healing itself a reward for his faith? Yes, he believed that particular word of the Lord's; but this is the adherence of faith, the entering into the number of Christ's disciples, the giving of himself to him as to the promised Messiah. Or, supposing he already truly believed, there may be indicated here a heightening and augmenting of his faith. For a true faith is yet most capable of this increase; "Lord, increase our faith;" (Luke xvii. 5;) and so in him who said, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief," (Mark ix. 24,) the true faith was born, though as yet its actings were weak and feeble. So too we read after the last miracle of the water made wine, that "his disciples believed on him," (John ii. 11,) who yet, being already his disciples, must have believed on him before.† Thus in the Old Testament they who suffered themselves to be guided by Moses must have already believed that he was the instrument of God for their deliverance, yet not the less is it said after the great overthrow of Pharaoh and his host, that the people "believed the Lord and his servant Moses." (Exod. xiv. 31.) We have another analogous example, 1 Kin. xvii. 24, where after the mighty work which Elijah did, raising the widow's son, she addresses him thus: "Now *by this* I know thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth," while yet she had recognized him as such before, (ver. 18;) now, however, her faith received a new confirmation; (cf. John xi. 15; xiii. 19;) and so we may accept it here.

\* The Jews have their miracle, evidently founded upon, and in rivalry of, this. Vitringa (*De Synag.*, p. 147,) quotes it: Quando ægrotavit Filius R. Gamalielis, duos misit studiosos sapientiæ ad R. Chanina, Dusæ filium, ut per preces pro eo gratiam divinam implorarent. Postquam eos vidit, ascendit in cœnaculum suum, Deumque pro eo oravit. Ubi verò descendit, dixit, Abite, quia febris illum jam dereliquit. . . . Illi verò considentes, signatè annotarunt illam horam, et quando reversi sunt ad R. Gamalielem, dixit ipsis, Per cultum! Nec excessu nec defectu temporis peccastis, sed sic prorsus factum: eâ enim ipsâ horâ dereliquit ipsum febris, et petiit à nobis aquam potandam. Cf. LAMPE, *Com. in Joh.*, v. 1, p. 813.

† Beda: Unde datur intelligi et in fide gradus esse, sicut et in aliis virtutibus, quibus est initium, incrementum, et perfectio. Hujus ergo fides initium habuit, cum filii salutem petiit: incrementum cum credidit sermoni Domini dicentis, Filius tuus vivit; deinde perfectionem obtinuit, nuntiantibus servis.

### III.

## THE FIRST MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

LUKE v. 1—11.

THERE have been some in all times who have deemed themselves bound to distinguish this narrative from those in St. Matthew (iv. 18), and St. Mark (i. 16—20). Augustine, for example, finds the differences so considerable, that he can only suppose the circumstance narrated by St. Luke to have first happened, our Lord then predicting to Peter that hereafter he should catch men; but not at that time summoning him to enter on the work; that without any sinful drawing back, he and his fellows returned after a while to their usual employments;—they only on a somewhat later occasion, that recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark, hearing the word of command, “Follow me,” which then they obeyed, and attached themselves for ever to their heavenly Lord.\*

Now that there are some difficulties, yet such as hardly deserve that name, in the harmonizing of the two accounts, every one will readily admit; but the flying immediately to the resource of supposing an event happened, with slight variations, twice or even three times over, whenever there is any difficulty in bringing the parallel accounts perfectly to agree, seems a very questionable expedient, at least to him who will deal honestly in the matter, and will ask himself whether he would be satis-

\* *De Cons. Evang.*, l. 2, c. 17: Unde datur locus intelligere eos ex capturâ piscium ex more remeasse, ut postea fieret quod Mathæus et Marcus narrant . . . Tunc enim non subductis ad terram navibus tanquam curâ redeundi, sed ita cum secuti sunt, tanquam vocantem ac jubentem ut eum sequerentur. Mr. Greswell in the same way, (see his *Dissert.*, v. 2, *Diss.* 9,) earnestly pleads for the keeping asunder the two narrations. Yet any one who wishes to see how capable they are, by the expenditure of a little pains, of being exactly reconciled, has only to refer to SPANHEIM'S *Dub. Evang.*, v. 3, p. 337. Lightfoot, in his *Harmony*, sees but the records of one and the same event, and Grotius and Hammond.



fied with such an explanation in any other history. It is for him a far greater difficulty made than avoided. For the other is nothing so great, indeed in most cases, as here, is none at all. Any one who knows the various aspects, yet all true, in which the same event will present itself from different points of view to different witnesses, who keeps in mind how very few points in any complex fact or event any narration whatever can seize, least of all a written one, which in its very nature is limited, will little wonder when two or three narrators have in part seized diverse as the culminating points of a narrative, have brought out different moments of an event: he will rather be grateful to that providence of God which thus often sets us not merely in the place of one bystander, but of more; allows us to see the acts of Christ, each part of which is significant, from various points of view; to hear of his discourses, not merely what one heard and carried away, but also that which sunk especially deep into the heart and memory of another.

A work exclusively devoted to the miracles of our Lord has only immediately to do with the narrative of St. Luke, for in that only the miracle appears. That which followed upon the miracle, the effectual calling of four apostles, appears in the parallel narratives as well—he thus by his narrative excellently completing theirs, and explaining to us why the Lord, when he bade these future chiefs of his kingdom to follow him, should have clothed the accompanying promise in that especial shape, “I will make you fishers of men;” words which would anyhow have had their propriety as addressed to fishers whom he found casting their nets, and unconsciously prophesying of their future work,\* yet winning a peculiar fitness after he has just shown them what successful fishers of the mute creatures of the sea, he could make them, if only they would be obedient to his word: whereupon linking, as was so often his custom, the higher to the lower, and setting forth that higher in the forms of the lower, he bade them exchange their present for a loftier calling; he still contemplating that under the same aspect, as a fishing, though now of men, which at his bidding, and under his direction, they should no less successfully accomplish.

But when we compare John i. 40—42, would it not appear as though of these four, Andrew and Peter at least, and perhaps John himself, (ver. 35,) had been already called? No doubt they had been then, on the banks of Jordan, brought into a transient fellowship with their future Lord; but, as would appear, after that meeting with him

\* *Auct. Oper. Imperf. in Matth., Hom. 6*: Futuræ dignitatis gratiam artificii sui opere prophetantes. Augustine (*Serm. Inedd. Serm. 58*): Petrus piscator non posuit retia, sed mutavit.

mentioned by St. John, had returned to their ordinary occupations, and only at this later period attached themselves finally and fully to him, following him whithersoever he went;\* this miracle most likely being, as indeed seems intimated, (ver. 8,) that which stirred the very depths of their hearts, which gave them such new insights into the glory of Christ's person, as prepared them to yield themselves without reserve unto him. Consistently with this view, the whole transaction bears the stamp of being between those who have not met now for the first time. So far from their betraying no previous familiarity, as some have said, Peter calls Jesus "*Master,*" and his saying "*Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net,*" implies a previous acquaintance with the Lord, from which he had already received impressions of his power and of the weight of his words. Moreover, that there should thus have been the *two* callings seems quite in the manner of a divine teacher; who would hasten nothing, who was content to leave spiritual processes to advance as do the natural; who could bide his time, and did not expect the full corn in the ear the day after he had sown the seed in the ground. On that former occasion the Lord cast his word in the hearts of Andrew and Peter, and then left it to take root downward and spring upward: and not in vain, for he now returned and found it ready to bear the ripe fruits of faith. Yet it is not that we need therefore presume so gradual a process *in all*. But as some statues are cast at once, others only little by little hewn and polished, according as the material, metal or stone, suits the one or the other process, so are there, to use an expression of Donne's, "*fusile* apostles" like St. Paul, whom one and the same word from heaven, as a lightning flash, at once melts and moulds; and others by more gradual degrees shaped and polished into the perfect image of what the Lord, the great master-sculptor, would have them to be.

But to enter something more into the miracle itself,—our Lord, who had found his future apostles engaged in washing their nets,† had been enabled, through Peter's ready compliance with his request, to teach the people, unhindered by the pressure of their multitudes. And

\* It is often said that the other was *Vocatio ad notitiam et familiaritatem*, or, *ad fidem*; this, *ad apostolatam*. See the remarks of Scultetus, *Crit. Sac.*, v. 6, p. 1956.

† It has been ingeniously and usefully remarked by a mystic writer of the middle ages, that this their washing and repairing (Matt. iv. 21,) of their nets, after they had used them, ought ever to be imitated by all "fishers of men," after they have cast in *their* nets for a draught; meaning by this that they should seek carefully to purify and cleanse themselves from aught which in that very act they may have gathered of sin, impurities of vanity, of self-elation, or of any other kind; and that this they must do, if they would use their nets effectually for a future draught.

having now left speaking, he bade him to put out his boat a little further into the deeper, and therefore the likelier, waters, and to let down his nets\* for a draught, designing himself, the meanwhile, to take the fisherman in *his* net. For he whose purpose it was by the weak things of the world to confound the strong,† who meant to draw emperors to himself by fishermen, and not fishermen by emperors, lest his Church should even seem to stand in the wisdom and power of men, rather than in the wisdom and power of God—he saw in these unlearned fishermen of the Galilæan lake the fittest instruments for his work.‡ To this exhortation of his future Lord, Simon Peter replied, that during all the night, in other words, during all the period opportunist for the capture of fish,§ they had been laboring, and their labor had been utterly without success; but, with the beginnings of no weak faith already working in him, adds, “*Nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net.*” For these may not be interpreted as the words of one half despairing of the issue: as though he for himself expected nothing, but to satisfy the Master, and to prove to him the fruitlessness of further efforts, would comply with his desire.|| On the contrary, they are spoken more in the spirit of the Psalmist, when he exclaimed,

\* Here it is more generally *δίκτυον*, probably from *δίκειν*, to throw; but at Matt. iv. 18; Mark i. 16, it is specialized as the *ἀμφιβληστρον* (= *ἀμφιβολή*), the *casting* net, as its derivation from *ἀμφιβάλλω* plainly shows; in Latin, *funda* or *jaculum*. It would naturally be circular, and were there any doubt about its shape, the account in Herodotus (l. 2, c. 95,) of the manner in which the Egyptian fishermen protected themselves at night from the mosquitoes, namely, by suspending their net (*ἀμφιβληστρον*) in the form of a tent over the place where they slept, would be decisive. (See the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Ant.*, s. v. *Rete*, p. 822.)

† With the history of this calling, more especially as it appears in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, the call of Amos, as he himself records it, will supply an interesting parallel: “I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son, but I was an herdman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit, and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.” (Amos vii. 14, 15. Cf. 1 Kin. xix. 19.)

‡ See AUGUSTINE, *Serm.* 381.

§ See LAMPE (*Comm. in Joh.*, v. 3, p. 727,) for passages in proof of this, which indeed is familiar to us all. This passage from Pliny (*H. N.*, l. 9, c. 23,) may be added to his quotations: *Vagantur gregatim ferè cujusque generis squamosi. Capiuntur ante solis ortum: tum maximè piscium fallitur visus. Noctibus, quies: et illustribus æquè, quàm die, cernunt. Aiunt et si teratur gurgis, interesse capturæ: itaque plures secundo tractu capi, quàm primo.*

|| Maldonatus: Non desperatione felicioris jactûs hoc dicit Petrus, aut quod Christo vel non credat, vel obedire nolit: sed potius ut majorem in Christo fidem declaret; quod cum totâ nocte laborantes nihilprehendisset, tamen ejus confidens verbis, iterum *retia laxaret.*

“Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” (Ps. cxxvii. 1.) It is as though he would say, “We have done nothing during all the night, and had quite lost hope of doing any thing; yet at thy word and bidding we will readily renew our efforts, which we are sure will be no longer in vain.” And his act of faith was abundantly rewarded; “*They inclosed a great multitude of fishes;*” so many indeed, that “*their net brake.*”

It was not merely that Christ, by his omniscience, knew that now there were fishes in that spot; we may not thus extenuate the miracle; but rather we are to contemplate him as the Lord of nature, who by the secret, yet mighty magic of his will, was able to wield and guide even the unconscious creatures to his aims. Yet since the power that drew the fish to that spot is the same that at all times guides their periodic migrations, which, wondrous as it is, we yet cannot call miraculous, there is plainly something that differences this miracle and the other of like kind, (John xxi. 6,) with that no less of the stater in the fish’s mouth, (Matt. xvii. 27,) from Christ’s other miracles,—in that these three are not comings in of a new and hitherto unwonted power into the region of nature; but they are coincidences, *divinely brought about*, between words of Christ and facts in that world of nature. An immense haul of fishes, or a piece of money in the mouth of one, are themselves no miracles;\* but the miracle lies in the falling in of these with a word of Christ’s, which has beforehand pledged itself that it shall be so. The natural is lifted up into the miraculous by the manner in which it is timed, by the ends which it is made to serve.† Christ here appears as the ideal man, the second Adam of the 8th Psalm, “Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. . . . the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea.” (ver. 6, 8.)

When by the assistance of their partners in the other ship, whom they beckoned to their assistance, the fishes were at length hauled in,‡

\* Thus Yarrell (*Hist. of British Fishes*, v. 1, p. 125): At Brighton in June, 1808, the shoal of mackerel was so great, that one of the boats had the meshes of her nets so completely occupied by them that it was impossible to drag them in. The fish and nets therefore in the end sunk together.

† See page 19.

‡ On the nets breaking now, and not breaking, as it is expressly said they did not on occasion of the second miraculous draught of fishes, (John xxi. 11,) and the mystical meaning which has been found in this, I would refer the reader to what there will be said.

they were so many as to threaten to sink\* the ship. And now Peter, while taking others, is himself taken ; while drawing the multitudes of fishes into *his* net, he has himself fallen into the net of Christ ; one of the first to discover that to be taken in that net is to be taken for life. † “Admire,” exclaims Chrysostom, “the dispensation of the Lord, how he draws each by the art which is most familiar and natural to him—as the Magians by a star, so the fishermen by fish” ‡—a thought which Donne in a sermon on this text enlarges thus : “The Holy Ghost speaks in such forms and such phrases as may most work upon them to whom he speaks. Of David, that was a shepherd before, God says, he took him to feed his people. To those Magi of the East, who were given to the study of the stars, God gave a star to be their guide to Christ at Bethlehem. To those who followed him to Capernaum for meat, Christ took occasion by that to preach to them of the spiritual food of their souls. To the Samaritan woman whom he found at the well, he preached of the water of life. To these men in our text, accustomed to a joy and gladness when they took great store of fish, he presents his comforts agreeably to their taste, they should be fishers still. Christ makes heaven all things to all men, that he might gain all.” And Peter, astonished at the strange success of his cast, the same that he ever afterwards appears, as impetuous, yielding as freely to the impulse of the moment, with the beginnings of the same quick spiritual eye which made him the first to see the highest glory of the Saviour, even his eternal Sonship, and to confess it, could no longer, in the deep feeling of his own unholiness, endure the nearness of an altogether Holy One, but “*fell down at Jesus’ knees, crying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*” At moments like these all that is merely conventional is swept away, and the deep heart of man speaks out, and the deepest things that are in that heart come forth to the light. And this is the deepest thing that is in man’s heart under the law ; this sense of the gulf of separation that is between him and God. “Let not God speak with us lest we die ;” this was the voice of the people to Moses, as “they removed and stood afar off.” (Exod. xx. 18, 19.) “We shall surely die, because we have seen God.” (Judg. xiii. 22 ; cf. vi. 22, 23 ; Dan. x. 17 ; Isai. vi. 5.) Below this is the utterly profane state, in which there is no contrast, no contradiction felt between the holy and

\* *Bυθίζεσθαι*. The word occurs once besides, but then in a tropical sense. (1 Tim. vi. 9.)

† The author of a striking sermon, numbered 205, in the Benedictine *Appendix* to St. Augustine: *Dum insidiatur Petrus gregibus æquoris, ipse in retia incidit Salvatoris. Fit de prædone præda, de piscatore piscatio, de piratâ captivitas.*

‡ *Solere Christum capere suâ quemque arte, magos stellâ, piscatores piscibus.*

the unholy, between God and man. Above it is the state, which is that of grace, in which all the contradiction is felt, the deep gulf perceived which divides between sinful man and a holy God; yet is it felt at the same time that this gulf is bridged over, that it is possible for the two to meet, that in One who is sharer with both they have already been brought together. Into this higher state Christ now invites Peter, not taking him at his word and leaving him as he desired, but bidding him to lay aside his fears, and to accept a function and a work from him. For though his was indeed the presence of God, yet of him with his glory veiled and hidden, so that even sinful men might endure to be near it, and dwelling in that nearness, might step by step be prepared for the ultimate seeing of God as he is; which, though it must be death to the mere sinner, yet would be the highest blessedness to him who had been trained and fitted for it by beholding for a while his mitigated splendor in the person of the Incarnate Word, even such a beholding as would more and more have wrought holiness and purity in him.

And hereupon follow the reassuring words, "*Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men,*" from the lips of Jesus; words which were properly the inauguration of Peter and his fellows to the great work whereunto they were about to be sent. For we see continually for them that are called to some signal work in the kingdom of God, an inauguration, not formal, not always the same in its outward accidents; but always the same in this, that in it the earthly grows pale before the heavenly; the man recognizes his nothingness, his vileness, and recognizes it in a way which he never had done before, that so the work in him may be altogether God's and not man's, may not henceforward be spoiled by self intermingling with it. The true parallels to this passage, contemplated as such an inauguration as this, are Exod. iv. 10—17; Isai. vi.; Jer. i. 4—10; Judg. vi. 11—23; Acts ix. 8—9; and more remotely Dan. x., which, with many points of resemblance, is yet unlike in this, that it is not the first sending forth of one to his work in the kingdom of God.

"*Henceforth thou shalt catch men,*" or in the words of the other Evangelists, "I will make you fishers of men." Christ clothes the promise in forms of that art which was familiar to Peter; the fisherman is to *catch* men, as David, the shepherd, taken from among the sheep-folds, was to *feed* them. (Ps. lxxviii. 71, 72.) There is in these words a double magnifying of Peter's future function as compared with his past; that it is *men* and not poor fishes henceforth which he shall take, and that he shall take them *for life*, and not as he had taken his meaner prey, only for death. For no less than this is involved in the original word by which the catching is expressed, a word which thus supplies with a singular hap-

pinness an answer to the malignant sneer of Julian,\* who observed that the Galilæan did indeed most aptly term his apostles “fishers;” for as the fisherman draws out the fish from waters where they were free and happy, to an element in which they cannot breathe, but must presently perish, so did these.† But the expression used‡ singularly excludes such a turn;—“Thou shalt take men, and take them *for life*, not for death; those that were wandering at random through the salt-sea waves of the world, among

\* His words, quoted by Theophanes (*Hom.* 5,) are the following: Ζωὴ μὲν τοῖς ἐνυδροῖς τὸ ὕδωρ, θάνατος δὲ ὁ ἀήρ· εἰ δὴ τοῦτό ἐστιν ἀλήθης, οἱ μαθηταὶ ἄρα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀγρέοντες διὰ τοῦ κηρύγματος, τῇ ἀπωλείᾳ καὶ τῷ θανάτῳ ὡς τοὺς ἰχθύας, παραδίδασαι, See SUICER'S *Theas.* s. v. ἀλιεύς, for the reply of Theophanes.—At Ezek. xxix. 4, 5, the dragging forth of the dragon of Egypt from the waters is the expression of a great calamity, the prophecy of a certain doom, but here the drawing forth is exactly the contrary.—It was probably, as Origen supposes, (*Con. Cels.*, l. 1, c. 62,) from a confused remembrance of this passage that Celsus contemptuously styled the apostles “publicans and sailors” (ναῦτας). But this inexactness is only of a piece with his ignorance even of the number of the apostles; which was singular enough in one who undertook a formal refutation of Christianity.

† There is indeed an aspect in which the death of a fish, which follows on its being drawn out of the waters, has its analogy in the higher spiritual world. The man, drawn forth by these Gospel nets from the worldly sinful element in which before he lived and moved, does die to sin, die to the world; but only that out of this death he may rise to a higher life in Christ. This is brought out with much beauty by Origen (*Hom. 16 in Jerem.*): Ἐκείνοι οἱ ἰχθύες οἱ ἄλογοι ἀνελθόντες ἐν ταῖς σαγήναις ἀποθνήσκουσι θάνατον, οὐχὶ διαδεχομένης ζωῆς τὸν θάνατον· ὁ δὲ συλληφθεὶς ἐπὶ τῶν ἀλιέων Ἰησοῦ, καὶ ἀνελθὼν ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάσσης, καὶ αὐτὸς μὲν ἀποθνήσκει, ἀποθνήσκει δὲ τῷ κόσμῳ, ἀποθνήσκει τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, καὶ μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ζωοποιεῖται ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἀναλαμβάνει ἄλλην ζωὴν.

‡ Ζωογρῶν, from ζωός, and ἀγρένω, to take alive; and so used repeatedly in the Septuagint, (*Num.* xxxi. 15; *Deut.* xx. 16; *Josh.* ii. 13;) and in like manner ζωογρέια, the prey which is saved alive. (*Num.* xxi. 35; *Deut.* ii. 24.) Cf. HOMER *Iliad.* ζ, ver. 46, where one pleading for his life, exclaims,

Ζώογρει, Ἄτρεές νιέ, σὺ δ' ἄξια δέξαι ἄποινα.

The same nice accuracy in the use of the word is observable 2 *Tim.* ii. 26, which when rightly understood is a parallel to this in more than the single word. The αὐτοῦ and the ἐκείνου there can scarcely refer to the same person, and probably neither of them to the Devil in the clause before, but αὐτοῦ to the δούλος Κυρίου, ver. 24, and ἐκείνου to Θεός, ver. 25; and the sense will then be, that the servant of the Lord is to teach with this patience, to the end that, they who are caught in the snare of the Devil, may be by him (ὕπ' αὐτοῦ) taken alive (ἐζωογρεμένοι) out of his power, and preserved to the will of God (εἰς τὸ ἐκείνου θέλημα), “may prove fit instruments for his service,” in Hammond's words, who in part agrees with this interpretation, as does Theophylact. See SUICER'S *Theas.* s. v. ζωογρέω.—It appears as if the old Italic version took ζωογρέω in its other derivation, (from ζωή and ἀγείρω,) for we find the passage quoted by St. Ambrose and other early fathers, Eris vivificans homines; but in the Vulgate, Homines eris capiens.

its deep unquiet waters, full of whirlpools and fears, the smaller of them falling a prey to the greater,\* and all with the weary sense as of a vast prison, thou shalt gather into one, embracing them all within the same folds and recesses of the Gospel net; † which if they break not through, nor leap over, they shall at length be drawn up to shore, out of the dark gloomy waters into the bright clear light of day, and shall there and then be collected into vessels for eternal life." (Matt. xiii. 48.)

Another point of resemblance is the ignorance on the part of the fisher of what fish he will gather in, whether many or few, or whether any at all will reward his labors. He casts in his net, knowing that the success must be from above; and it is not otherwise with the preaching of the Word. There are yet other peculiar fitnesses in the image drawn from the occupation of the fisher, rather, for instance, than in one borrowed from the nearly allied pursuits of the hunter. The fisher does more often take his prey alive; he draws it *to* him, does not drive it *from* him; ‡ and not merely to himself, but draws all which he

\* Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps. lxiv. 6*): Mare enim in figurâ dicitur seculum hoc, falsitate amarum, procellis turbulentum: ubi homines cupiditatibus perversis et pravis facti sunt velut pisces invicem se devorantes. Ambrose: Et bene apostolica instrumenta piscandi retia sunt; quæ non captos perimunt, sed reservant, et de profundo ad lumen extrahunt, et fluctuantes de infernis ad superna perducunt.

† Augustine (*Serm. 59, Serm. Inedd*): Nam sicut rete quos continet vagari non patitur, ita et fides errare, quos colligit, non permittit: et sicut ibi captos sinu quodam perducit ad navim, ita et hic congregatos gremio quodam deducit ad requiem. Yet this title of "fishers" itself also fails in part, and does not set out the *whole* character of the Christian ministry; indeed only two moments of it with any strength, the first and the last,—the bringing in to the Church, as the inclosing within the net, and the bringing safely to the final kingdom, as the landing of the net with its contents upon the shore. (Matt. xiii. 48.) All which is between it leaves unexpressed, and yields therefore in fitness and completeness, as in frequency of use, to the image borrowed from the work of the shepherd; in testimony of which it has given us no such names as "pastor" and "flock" to enrich our Christian language. That of "shepherd" expresses exactly all which the term "fisher" leaves untouched, the habitual daily care for the members of Christ, his *peculium* in every sense, after they are brought into the fellowship of his Church. This title of "fishers" sets forth the work more of the ingathering of souls, the missionary activity; that of shepherd more the tending and nourishing of souls that have thus been ingathered. This, therefore, fitly comes the first: it was said to Peter, "*Thou shalt catch men,*" before it was said to him, "*Feed my sheep;*" and each time a different commission, or at least a different side of the commission, is expressed; he shall be both evangelist and pastor.

‡ Spanheim (*Dub. Evang., v. 3, p. 350*): Non *renatores* Dominus vocatos voluit, sed *piscatores*, non homines abigentes à se prædam, sed colligentes: and many other points of comparison between the fisher and the minister of Christ, he brings out. Yet the image still remains, even in the New Testament, open to the other use; thus in the ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος of Jam. i. 14, are doubtless allusions to the fish *drawn* from



has taken to one another, even as the Church brings together the divided hearts, the fathers to the children, gathers into one fellowship the scattered tribes of men. Again, the work of the fisher is rather a work of art and skill than of force and violence;\* so that Tertullian† finds in this miracle a commencing fulfilment of Jer. xvi. 16, "Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them;" though indeed it may very well be a question whether in those words there lies not rather a threat than a promise. It is, however, quite in the spirit of the New Covenant to take a threatening of the Old, and fulfil it, yet so to transform it in the fulfilling that it shall be no longer what it was, a curse, but a blessing. Thus, to fall into the hands of the Lord, would have been in the old time a woe, but it may now be the chiefest blessing; and in this manner his application of the words may

its safe hiding places, and *enticed* by the tempting bait (*ἑλειαρ*) to its destruction. Cf. Hab. i. 14—17.

\* So Ovid (*Halieut.*): *Noster in arte labor positus.* Cf. 2 Cor. xii. 16, *ὑπάρχων πανοῦργος, ὄλοι ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον.* And Augustine (*De Util. Jejun.*, c. 9.) brings out the difference between the fisher and the hunter: *Quare Apostoli neminem coegerunt, neminem impulerunt? Quia piscator est, retia mittit in mare, quod incurrerit, trahit. Venator autem sylvas cingit, sentes excutit; terroribus undique multiplicatis cogit in retia. Ne hac eat, ne illic eat: inde occurre, inde cæde, inde terre; non exeat, non effugiat.* Thus hunting is most often an image used in malam partem: the oppressions of the ungodly are often described under images borrowed from thence. (Ps. x. 9; xxxv. 7.) Nimrod is "a mighty hunter before the Lord," (Gen. x. 9.) where to think of any other hunting but a tyrannous driving of men before him is idle. Augustine has given the right meaning of the words (*De Civ. Dei*, l. 16, c. 4): *Quid significatur hoc nomine quod est venator, nisi animalium terrigenarum deceptor, oppressor, extinc-tor?* Luther, in one of his Letters, speaks of a hunting party at which he was present: "Much it pitied me to think of the mystery and emblems which lieth beneath it. For what does this symbol signify, but that the Devil, through his godless huntsmen and dogs, the bishops and theologians to wit, doth privily chase and snatch the innocent poor little beasts? Ah, the simple and credulous souls came thereby far too plain before my eyes." Yet it is characteristic that the hunting, in which is the greatest coming out of power, should of men be regarded as the noblest occupation: and thus we find it even in Plato who (*De Legg.*, p. 823.) approves of it, while fishing he would willingly forbid as an *ἀργὸς θήρα* and *ἔρωσ οὐ σφέδρα ἐλεμθέριος.* (BECKER'S *Charicles*, v. 1, p. 437.)

† *Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 9: *De tot generibus operum quid utique ad piscaturam respexit, ut ab illâ in Apostolos sumeret Simonem et filios Zebedæi? Non enim simplex factum videri potest, de quo argumentum processurum erat, dicens Petro trepidanti de copiosâ indagine piscium: Ne time, abhinc enim homines eris capiens. Hoc enim dicto, intellectum illis suggerebat adimpletæ prophetiæ; se eum esse qui per Hierimiam pronuntiarat, Ecce ego mittam piscatores multos, et piscabuntur illos. Denique relictis naviculis sequuti sunt eum; ipsum intelligentes, qui cœperat facere quod edixerat.* Cf. Cyril of Alexandria, in CRAMER'S *Catena*, who makes the same application of that verse from Jeremiah.

at any rate be justified. There is now a captivity which is blessed, blessed because it is deliverance from a freedom which is full of woe,—a “being made free from sin and becoming servants to God,” that so we may have our “fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” (Rom. vi. 20.) But the present passage might be brought with a more unquestionable propriety into relation with Ezek. xlvii. 9, 10, and the prophecy there of the fishers that should stand on Engedi, and the great multitude of fish that should be in the healed waters.

And as the ministers of Christ are fishers, so the faithful are aptly likened to fish. The comparison, which was so great a favorite in the early Church, probably did not derive its first impulse from these words of our Lord; but rather from the fact that it was the waters of baptism through which men were brought into life,\* and that only by abiding in that element into which they were introduced they continued to draw a true life: so that the two images cannot stand at the same time, excluding as they mutually do one another; for in one the blessedness is to remain in the waters, as in the vivifying element, in the other to be drawn forth from them into the purer and clearer air. In one Christ is the Fish,† in the other the chief Fisherman,—addressed therefore in that grand Orphic hymn attributed to the Alexandrian Clement, in words which may thus be translated,—

Fisher of mortal men,  
All that the savéd are,  
Ever the holy fish,  
From the fierce oceán  
Of the world's sea of sin  
By thy sweet life those enticest away.

And bringing their ships to shore, “*they forsook all, and followed him.*” But what was that “*all*” which “*they forsook*” ask some,

\* Tertullian (*De Bapt.*, c. 1): Sed nos pisciculi secundùm  $\epsilon\chi\theta\epsilon\upsilon$  nostrum Jesum Christum in aquâ nascimur; nec aliter quàm in aquâ permanendo salvi sumus. And Chrysostom on these words, “*I will make you fishers of men,*” exclaims, “Truly, a new method of fishing! for the fishers draw out the fishes from the waters, and kill those that they have taken. But we fling into the waters, and those that are taken are made alive.”

† Augustine, (*De Civ. Dei*, l. 18, c. 23.) giving the well-known Greek anagram of  $\text{ΙΧΘΥΣ}$ , adds: In quo nomine mysticè intelligitur Christus, eò quod in hujus mortalitatis abyssu. velut in aquarum profunditate vivus, hoc est, sine peccato esse poterit. In the chasing away of the evil spirit by the fish's gull (Tob. viii. 2, 3.) a type was often found in the early Church, of the manner in which, when Christ is near, the works of the Devil are destroyed. Thus Prosper of Aquitaine: Christus . . . piscis in suâ passione decoctus, cujus ex interioribus remediis quotidie illuminamur et pascimur.

that they should afterwards seem to make so much use of it, saying, "Behold we have forsaken all, and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?" (Matt. xix. 27.) It was their *all*, and therefore though it might have been but a few poor boats and nets, it was much. And the forsaking consists not in the more or less that is forsaken, but in the spirit in which it is left. A man may be holden by love to a miserable hovel with as fast bands as to a sumptuous palace; for it is the worldly affection which holds him, and not the world: just as we gather from the warnings scattered through the ascetic books of the middle ages how they who had renounced, it may be, great possessions in the world, would now, if they did not earnestly watch against it, come to cling to their hood, their breviary, the scanty furniture of their bare cell, with the same feelings of property as they once exercised in ampler matters, so witnessing that they had no more succeeded in curing themselves of worldly affections, than a man would succeed in curing himself of covetousness by putting out the eye which in times past had been often the inlet of desire. These apostles might have left little, when they left their possessions, but they left much, when they left their desires.\*

A word or two here in conclusion may find place generally upon the symbolic acts of our Lord, whereof according to his own distinct assurance, we here have one. The desire of the human mind to set forth the truth which it deeply feels in acts rather than by words, or it may be by blended act and word, has a very deep root in our nature, which always strives after the concrete; and it manifests itself not merely in the institution of *fixed* symbolic acts, as the anointing of kings, or the casting earth into a grave; but more strikingly yet, in acts that are the free and momentary products of some creative mind, which has more to utter than it can find words to be the bearers of, or would utter it in a more expressive manner than these permit. This manner of teaching, however frequent in Scripture, (1 Kin. ii. 30. 31; xxii. 11; Acts xiii. 51,) yet belongs not to Scripture only, nor is it even peculiar to the East, although there it is most frequent, and most entirely at home; but every

\* Augustine (*Enarr. 3<sup>a</sup> in Ps. ciii. 17*): Multum dimisit, fratres mei, multum dimisit, qui non solum dimisit quidquid habebat, sed etiam quidquid habere cupiebat. Quis enim pauper non turgescit in spem sæculi hujus? quis non quotidie cupit augere quod habet? Ista cupiditas præcisa est. Prorsus totum mundum dimisit Petrus, et totum mundum Petrus accipiebat. And Gregory the Great following in the same line (*Hom. 5 in Evang.*): Multum ergo Petrus et Andreas dimisit, quando uterque etiam desideria habendi dereliquit. Multum dimisit, qui cum re possessâ etiam concupiscentiis renuntiavit. A sequentibus ergo tanta dimissa sunt, quanta à non sequentibus concupisci potuerunt. Cf. Clemens of Alexandria, *Quis Dives Salvus?* c. 20, v. 2, p. 946, Potter's ed.

where, as men have felt strongly and deeply, and desired to make others feel so, they have had recourse to such a language as this, which has many advantages for bringing home its truth. When Hannibal, for instance, as he was advancing into Italy, set some of his captives to fight,\* placing before them freedom and presents and rich armor for the victor, and at least escape from present extreme misery for the slain; who does not feel that he realized to his army the blessings which not victory alone, but even the other alternative of death, would give them, in affording release from the intolerable evils of their present state, as words could never have done? or that Diogenes expressed his contempt for humanity by his noonday lantern more effectually than by all his scornful words he could ever have expressed it? As the Cynic, so too the Hebrew prophets, though in quite another temper, would oftentimes weave their own persons into such parabolic acts, would use themselves as part of their own symbol, and that because nothing short of this would satisfy the earnestness with which the truth of God, whereof they desired to make others partakers, possessed their own souls. (Ezek. xii. 1—12; Acts xxi. 11.) And thus, too, not this only, but many actions of our Lord's were such an embodied teaching,† the incorporation of an act, having a deeper significance than lay upon the surface, and being only entirely intelligible when we recognize in them a significance such as this. (Matt. xxi. 18, 19; John xxi. 19.) Christ being the Word, his deeds who is the Word, are themselves also words for us.‡

\* POLYBIUS, *Hist.*, l. 2, c. 62.

† Lampe: In umbrâ præmonstrabatur quàm læto successu in omni labore, quem in nomine Dei suscepturi essent, piscaturam præcipuè mysticam inter gentes instituentes, gavisuri sint. Grotius, who is much more forward to admit mystical meanings in the Scripture than in general he is given credit for, whether that is for his praise or the contrary, finds real prophecy in many of the subordinate details of this miracle: Libenter igitur hinc veteres sequor, qui præcedentis historiæ hoc putant esse τὸ ἀλληγοροῦμενοι, Apostolos non suapte industriâ sed Christi imperio ac virtute expansis Evangelii retibus tantam facturos capturam, ut opus habituri sint subsidiariâ multorum εὐαγγελιστῶν operâ; atque ita impletum iri non unam navem, Judæorum scilicet, sed et alteram gentium, sed quarum navium futura sit arcta atque indivulsa societas. Cyril of Alexandria, (see CRAMER'S *Catena*, in *loc.*) had anticipated this; and compare also Theophylact, (in *loc.*) who besides the above, finds one more significant circumstance; the night during which they had taken nothing was the time of the law; but there was then no success, nor a kingdom of God with all men pressing into it, till Christ was come, and he had given the word.

‡ Augustine (*In Ev. Joh.*, *Tract.* 24): Nam quia ipse Christus Verbum est etiam factum Verbi verbum nobis est. *Ep.* 102, qu. 6: Nam sicut humana consuetudo verbis, ita divina potentia etiam factis loquitur.

## IV.

### THE STILLING OF THE TEMPEST.

MATT. viii. 23—27 ; MARK iv. 35—41 ; LUKE viii. 22—25.

THE three Evangelists who relate this history agree in placing it immediately before the healing of the possessed in the country of the Gadarenes. It was evening, the evening, probably, of that day on which the Lord had spoken all those parables recorded in Matt. xiii. (cf. Mark iv. 35), when, dismissing the multitude, he would fain pass over to the other side of the lake, and so, for a little while, withdraw from the tumult and the press. With this intention, he was received by the disciples "*even as he was\* in the ship.*" But before the transit was accomplished, a sudden and violent squall, † such as these small inland seas, surrounded with mountain gorges, are notoriously exposed to, descended on the bosom of the lake : and the ship which bore the Saviour of the world appeared to be in imminent peril, as, humanly speaking, no doubt it was ; for these men, exercised to the sea many of them from their youth, and familiar with all the changes of that lake, would not have been terrified by the mere shadow of a danger. But though the danger was so real, and was ever growing more urgent, until "*the waves beat into the ship, so that now it was full,*" their Master, weary, it may be, after the toils of the day, continues sleeping still : he was, with details which St. Mark alone has preserved, "*in the hinder part of the ship, asleep upon a pillow ;*" and was not roused by all the tumult and confusion incident on such a moment. We behold him here as exactly the reverse of Jonah ; the prophet asleep in the midst of a like danger through a dead conscience, the Saviour out

\* Ὡς ἦν, probably, sine ullo ad iter apparatu.

† Σεισμὸς, which is generally an *earth*-quake ; (so Matt. xxiv. 7 ;) in Mark and Luke, λαίλαψ, which is defined by Hesychius, ἀνέμου συστροφὴ μεθ' ἑτεροῦ, a squall.

of a pure conscience—Jonah by his presence making the danger, Jesus yielding the pledge and the assurance of deliverance from the danger.\*

But the disciples understood not this. It was long, probably, before they dared to arouse him; yet at length they did so, and then with exclamations of haste and terror; as is evidenced by the double "*Master, master,*" of St. Luke. In St. Mark, they awaken him with words almost of rebuke, as if he were unmindful of their safety, "*Master, carest thou not that we perish?*" though no doubt they meant in this "*we*" to include their beloved Lord as well as themselves.† Then the Lord arose; from St. Mark it would appear, first blaming their want of faith, and then pacifying the storm; though the other Evangelists make the blame not to have gone before, but to have followed after, the allaying of the winds and waves. Probably it did both: he spoke first to them, quieting with a word the tempest in their bosoms; and then, having allayed the tumult of the outward elements, he again turned to them, and more leisurely blamed them for their lack of faith in him.‡

Yet is it to be observed that he does not, in St. Matthew, call them "*without faith,*" but "*of little faith.*"§ They were not wholly *without* faith; for, believing in the midst of their unbelief, they turned to Christ in their need. They had faith, but it was not quick and lively, it was not at hand as it should have been; "*Where is your faith?*" as in St. Luke he asks; so that it was like a weapon which a soldier has, but yet has mislaid, and cannot lay hold of in the moment of extremest need. The imperfection of their faith consisted not in this, that they appealed

\* Jerome (*Comm. in Matth.*, in loc.): Hujus signi typum in Jona legimus, quando ceteris periclitantibus ipse securus est et dormit et suscitatur: et imperio ac sacramento Passionis suae liberat suscitantes.

† On the different exclamations of fear which the different Evangelists put into the mouth of the disciples, Augustine says excellently well (*De Cons. Evang.*, l. 2, c. 24): Una eademque sententia est excitantium Dominum, voluntiumque salvari: nec opus est querere quid horum potius Christo dictum sit. Sive enim aliquid horum trium dixerint, sive alia verba que nullus Evangelistarum commemoravit, tantumdem tamen valentia ad eandem sententiæ veritatem, quid ad rem interest? And presently after (c. 28): Per hujusmodi Evangelistarum locutiones varias, sed non contrarias, rem planè utilissimam discimus et pernecessariam; nihil in cujusque verbis nos debere inspicere, nisi voluntatem, cui debent verba servire: nec mentiri quemquam, si aliis verbis dixerit quid ille voluerit, cujus verba non dicit; ne miseri anepes vocum, apicibus quodammodo literarum putent ligandam esse veritatem, cum utique non in verbis tantum, sed etiam in ceteris omnibus signis animorum, non sit nisi ipse animus inquirendus. Cf. c. 66, in fine.

‡ Theophylact: Ἡρώτων πάσας τὸν χειμῶνα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτῶν, τότε λέει καὶ τὸν τῆς θαλάσσης.

§ Not ἄπιστοι, but ὀλιγόπιστοι. The "*How is it ye have no faith?*" of St. Mark, must be overruled and explained by this word, and not *vice versa*.

unto their Lord for help, for herein was faith;\* but in the *excess* of their terror, in their counting it possible that the ship which bore their Lord, could ever truly perish.†

But especially noticeable are the words with which that Lord, as all three Evangelists relate, quieted the storm. He "*rebuked the winds and the sea*;" in the spirit of which words St. Mark relates, further, a more direct address to the furious elements, "*Peace, be still*,"‡ which it would be absurd to suppose a mere oratorical personification. Rather, as Maldonatus truly remarks, there is in these words a distinct recognition of Satan and the powers of evil as the authors of the disharmony in the outward world, a tracing of all these disorders up to their source in a person, a carrying of them back to him as their ultimate ground. The Lord elsewhere uses the same form of address to a fever, for it is said that he *rebuked* it, (Luke iv. 39,) where the same remarks will hold good.

And in the hour of her wildest uproar, nature yielded obedience unto him, who was come to reassert man's dominion over her, and over the evil powers, which held her in thrall, and had made her, who should have always been his willing handmaid, to be oftentimes the instrument of his harm and ruin.§ And his *word* was sufficient for this. He needed not, as Moses, to stretch a rod over the deep; he needed not, as his servant had needed, an instrument of power, foreign to himself, with which to do his mighty work; but only at his word "*the wind ceased*,"||

\* Something of the same kind we see in John the Baptist. No doubt there was a shaking of his faith before he could send to Jesus with the question, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. xi. 3;) but that he sent to Jesus and to no other to resolve him this doubt, proved that the faith which was assaulted, yet was not overthrown.

† They are blamed, not for fearing, but for being *οὐτὼ δειλοί*. Calvin: Quâ particulâ notat eos extra modum pavescere; . . . quemlibet verò timorem non esse fidei contrarium, inde patet, quod si nihil metuimus, obrepit supina carnis securitas.

‡ Σιώπα, *τεφίμωσο*. We may compare Ps. cvi. 9: "He *rebuked* (*ἐπιτίμησε*, LXX.) the Red Sea also," although there, as in a poem, the same stress cannot be laid on the word as here.

§ A notable specimen of the dexterity with which a neological interpretation may be insinuated into a book of geography occurs in RÖHR's *Palästina*, p. 59, in many respects a useful manual of the Holy Land. Speaking of this lake, and the usual gentleness and calmness of its waters, he adds, that it is from time to time disturbed by squalls from the neighboring hills, which yet, "*last not long*, nor are very perilous. (Matt. viii. 23—27.)" What his reference to this passage means is at once clear, and may be seen more largely expressed in Kuinoel, or any other rationalist commentary, in loc.

|| Ἐκόπασεν, as one ceases out of weariness (*κοπάζω*, from *κόπος*). Γαλήνη, probably not, as some propose, from γάλα, to express the soft *milky* color of the calm sea, but from

and there was a great calm." And then is added the moral effect which this great wonder exercised on the minds of those that were in the ship with him;—it may be, also on those that were in the "other little ships," which St. Mark has noted as sailing in their company: "The men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" an exclamation which only can find its answer in another exclamation of the Psalmist, "O Lord God of Hosts, who is like unto thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them." (Ps. lxxix. 8, 9.)\* We see then here one of the moral purposes to which, in the providence of God, who ordered all things for the glory of his Son, this miracle should serve. It should lead his disciples into thoughts ever higher and more awful of that Lord whom they followed, and should more and more bring them to feel that in nearness to him was all safety and deliverance from every danger. The danger which exercised, should strengthen, their faith,—who indeed had need of a mighty faith, since God, in St. Chrysostom's words, had chosen them to be the athletes of the universe.†

An old expositor has somewhat boldly said, "This power of the Lord's word, this admiration of them that were with him in the ship, holy David had predicted in the Psalm, saying, 'They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep,' " and so forward. (Ps. cviii. 23—30.) And as in the spiritual world, the inward is ever shadowed forth by the outward, we may regard this outward fact but as the clothing of an inward truth which in the language of this miracle the Lord declares unto men. He would set himself forth as the true Prince of Peace, (Isai. xi. 6—9,) as the speaker of peace to the troubled and storm-stirred heart of man, whether the storms that stir it be its own in-

γελῶ. So Catullus, describing the gently-stirred waters,—leni resonant plangore cachinni.

\* Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 20): Quum transfretat, Psalmus expungitur, Dominus, inquit, super aquas multas [Ps. xxxix. 3]: quum undas freti discutit, Abacuc adimpletur, Dispargens, inquit, aquas itinere [Hab. iii. 15]: quum ad minas ejus eliditur mare, Naum quoque absolvitur; Comminans, inquit, mari, et arefaciens illud, [Nah. i. 4.] utique cum ventis quibus inquietabatur.

† Bengel: Jesus habebat scholam ambulantiem, et in eâ scholâ multò solidius instituti sunt discipuli, quâ si sub tecto unius collegii sine ullâ solitudine atque tentatione vixissent.—The fact which has perplexed some, that, apparently, the apostles were never baptized, at least with Christ's baptism, has been by others curiously enough explained, that as the children of Israel were baptized into Moses in the Red Sea, (1 Cor. x. 2,) so the apostles were in this storm baptized into Christ. Tertullian (*De Bapt.*, c. 12): Alii planè satis coactè injiciunt, tunc apostolos baptismi vicem implèsse, quum in naviculâ fluctibus adpersi operiti sunt.



ner passions, or life's outward calamities and temptations. Thus Augustine, making application of all parts of the miracle :—" We are sailing in this life as through a sea, and the wind rises, and storms of temptations are not wanting. Whence is this, save because Jesus is sleeping in thee? If he were not sleeping in thee, thou wouldest have calm within. But what means this, that Jesus is sleeping in thee, save that thy faith, which is from Jesus, is slumbering in thine heart? What shalt thou do to be delivered? Arouse him and say, Master, we perish. He will awaken; that is, thy faith will return to thee, and abide with thee always. When Christ is awakened, though the tempest beat into, yet it will not fill, thy ship; thy faith will now command the winds and the waves, and the danger will be over."\*

Nor shall we in any wise do wrong to the literal truth of this or any other of Christ's miracles, by recognizing the character at once symbolic and prophetic, which, no doubt, many of them also bear, and this among the number. As the kernel of the old humanity, Noah and his family, was once contained in the Ark which was tossed upon the waves of the deluge, so the kernel of the new humanity, of the new creation, Christ and his apostles, in this little ship. And the Church of Christ has evermore resembled this tempested bark, in that the waves

\* *Enarr. in Ps. xciii. 19*: Si cessaret Deus et non misceret amaritudines felicitatibus seculi, oblivisceremur eum. Sed ubi angores molestiarum faciunt fluctus animæ, fides illa quæ ibi dormiebat, excitetur. Tranquillum enim erat, quando dormivit Christus in mari: illo dormiente, tempestas orta est, et cœperunt periclitari. Ergo in corde Christiano et tranquillitas erit et pax, sed quamdiu vigilat fides nostra: si autem dormit fides nostra, periclitamur. . . . Sed quomodo illa navis cùm fluctuaret, excitatus est Christus à fluctuantibus et dicentibus, Domine, perimus: surrexit ille, imperavit tempestatibus, imperavit fluctibus, cessavit periculum, facta est tranquillitas, sic et te cùm turbant concupiscentiæ malæ, persuasiones malæ, fluctus sunt, tranquillabuntur. Jam desperas et putas te non pertinere ad Dominum; Evigilet fides tua, excita Christum in corde tuo; surgente fide, jam agnoscis ubi sis; . . . Evigilante Christo tranquilletur cor tuum, ut ad portum quoque pervenias. Thus again (*In Ev. Joh., Tract. 49*): Fides tua de Christo, Christus est in corde tuo. . . . Intranct venti cor tuum, utique ubi navigas, ubi hanc vitam tanquam procellosum et periculosum pelagus transis; intrant venti, movent fluctus, turbant navim. Qui sunt venti? Audisti convicium, irasceris: convicium ventus est, iracundia fluctus est: periclitaris, disponis respondere, disponis maledictum maledicto reddere, jam navis propinquat naufragio; excita Christum dormientem. Ideo enim fluctuas, et mala pro malis reddere præparas, quia Christus dormit in navi. In corde enim tuo somnus Christi, oblivio fidei. Nam si excites Christum, id est, recolas fidem, quid tibi dicit tanquam vigilans Christus in corde tuo? Ego audivi, Dæmonium habes, et pro eis oravi; audit Dominus et patitur; audit servus et indignatur. Sed vindicari vis. Quid enim, ego jam sum vindicatus? Cùm tibi hæc loquitur fides tua, quasi imperatur ventis et fluctibus, et fit tranquillitas magna. Cf. *Serm. 63; Enarr. in Ps. lv. 8*; and *Enarr. 2<sup>a</sup> in Ps. xxv. in init.*

of the world rage horribly around it, in that it has evermore been delivered out of the perils which seemed ready to overwhelm it, and this because Christ is in it; who being roused by the cry of his servants, rebukes these winds and these waters, before they utterly overwhelm this ship.\* In the Old Testament Ezekiel gives us a magnificent picture of a worldly kingdom under the image of a stately and gorgeous galley, which he describes with every circumstance that could heighten its glory and its beauty (xxvii. 4—9); but that ship with all its outward bravery and magnificence utterly perishes: “thy rowers have brought thee into great waters; the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas,” and they that have hoped in it and embarked in it their treasures, wail over its wreck with a bitter wailing; (ver. 26—36;) this kingdom of God meanwhile, which seems by comparison but as the slight and unhonored fishing boat that every wave would engulf, rides triumphantly over all, and comes safely into haven at the last.

\* Tertullian (*De Bapt.*, c. 12): Cæterum navicula illa figuram Ecclesiæ præferbat, quod in mari, id est seculo, fluctibus, id est persecutionibus et tentationibus, inquietatur, Domino per patientiam velut dormiente, donec orationibus sanctorum in ultimis suscitatus, compescat seculum et tranquillitatem suis reddat. Ambrose: Arbor quædam in navi est crux in Ecclesiâ, quâ inter tot totius sæculi blanda et perniciose naufragia incolumis sola servatur. Compare a passage of much beauty in the *Clementine Homilies* (COTELER. *Patt. Apostt.*, v. 1, p. 609) beginning thus: Ἐοικεν γὰρ ὅλον τὸ πρῶγμα τῆς ἐκκλησίας νηὶ μεγάλῃ, διὰ σφῆδρῶν χειμῶνος ἀνέρας φερούση ἐκ πολλῶν τόπων ὄντας, καὶ μίαν τινὰ ἀγαθῆς βασιλείας πόλιν οἰκεῖν θάλασσαν, κ. τ. λ. The image of the world as a great ship, whereof God was at once the maker and the pilot, was familiar to the Indians (PHILOSTRATUS, *De Vita Apollonii*, l. 3, c. 35; VON BOHLEN, *Das Alte Indien*), and the same symbolic meaning lay in the procession of Egyptian priests bearing the sacred ship (the navigium auratum, CURT., l. 4, c. 7) full of the image of the gods. In Egypt it was the favorite manner to represent the gods as sailing in a ship. (CREUZER'S *Symbolik*, v. 2, p. 9, 3rd edit.) All this was recognized in the early Christian art, where the Church is continually set forth as a ship, against which the personified winds are fighting. (*Christliche Kunst-Symbolik*, p. 159.) Aringhi describes an old seal-ring in which the Church appears as this ship, sustained and supported by a great fish in the sea beneath, (Christ the ἸΧΘΥΣ, according to Ps. lxxii. 17, Aquila.) on its mast and poop two doves sitting, so that the three Clementine symbols, the ship, the dove, and the fish, appear here united in a single group.

## V.

### THE DEMONIACS IN THE COUNTRY OF THE GADARENES.

MATT. viii. 28—34; MARK v. 1—20; LUKE viii. 26—39.

BEFORE entering upon this, the most important, and, in many respects, the most difficult of the demoniac cures in the New Testament, it is impossible to avoid making generally a few prefatory remarks on the subject of the demoniacs\* of Scripture. It is a subject of which the difficulty is very much enhanced by the fact that, as in the case of some of the spiritual gifts, the gift, for instance, of tongues, the thing itself, if it still survives among us, yet does so no longer under the same name, nor yet with the same frequency and intensity as of old. We are obliged to put together, as best we can, the separate notices which have come down to us, and from them seek to frame some scheme, which will answer the demands of the different phenomena; we have not, at least with certainty, the thing itself to examine and to question, before our eyes.

It is, of course, easy enough to cut short the whole inquiry, and to leave no question at all, by saying these demoniacs were persons whom we should call insane—epileptic, maniac, melancholic. This has been often said, and the oftener perhaps, because there is a partial truth in the view that these possessions were bodily maladies. There was no

\* The most common name in Scripture for one thus possessed is *δαιμονιζόμενος*, (Matt. iv. 24, and often.) Besides this, *δαιμονισθείς*, (Mark v. 18; Luke viii. 36;) *ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ*, (Mark i. 2, 3;) *ἔχων πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον*, (Acts viii. 7;) *ἔχων δαιμόνια*, (Luke viii. 27;) *ἄνθρωπος ἔχων πνεῦμα δαιμονίων ἀκαθάρτων*. (Luke iv. 33.) Other more general descriptions, *καταδυναστευόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου*, (Acts x. 38;) *ὀχλούμενος ὑπὸ πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων*. (Luke vi. 18; Acts v. 16.) In classic Greek, one thus possessed was said *δαιμονῆν*, *κακοδαιμονῆν*, and the state of possession was called *κακοδαιμονία*.

doubt a substratum of disease, which in many cases helped to lay open to the deeper evil, and upon which it was superinduced:\* and in agreement with this view, we may observe that cases of possession are at once classed with those of various sicknesses, and at the same time distinguished from them, by the Evangelists; who thus at once mark the relation and the difference. (Matt. iv. 24; viii. 16; Mark i. 33.) But the scheme which confounds these cases with those of disease, does not, as, I think, every reverent handler of God's word must own, exhaust the matter; it cannot be taken as a satisfying solution; and this for more reasons than one.

And first, our Lord himself uses language which is not reconcilable with such a theory; he every where speaks of demoniacs not as persons merely of disordered intellects, but as subjects and thralls of an alien spiritual might; he addresses the evil spirit as distinct from the man; "Hold thy peace, and come out of him." (Mark i. 25.) And the poor reply, that he fell into and humored the notions of the afflicted in order to facilitate their cure,† is cut off by the fact that in his most confidential discourses with his disciples he uses exactly the same language. (Matt. x. 8; and especially xvii. 21, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.")‡ The allegiance we owe to Christ as the King of truth, who came, not to fall in with men's errors, but to deliver men out of their errors, compels us to believe that he would never have used language which would have upheld and confirmed so great an error in the minds of men as the supposition of Satanic influences, which did not in truth exist. For this error, if it was an error,

\* Origen (*in Matth.*, tom. 13, c. 6.) finds fault with some (*ιατροι*, he calls them,) who in his day saw in the youth mentioned Matt. xvii. 14, only one afflicted with the falling sickness. He himself runs into the opposite extreme, and will see no nature there, because they saw nothing but nature.

† Not to say that such treatment had been sure to fail. Schubert, in his book, full of wisdom and love, *Die Krankheiten und Störungen der menschlichen Seele*, several times observes how fatal all giving into a madman's delusions is for his recovery; how sure it is to defeat its own objects. He is living in a world of falsehood, and what he wants is not more falsehood, but some truth—the truth indeed in love, but still only the truth. And I know that the greatest physicians in this line in England act exactly upon this principle.

‡ It is hardly necessary to observe, that by this "going out" that is not implied, which Arnobius (*Adv. Gent.*, l. 1, c. 45) in the rudest manner expresses, when he speaks of *gens illa messorum in visceribus dæmonum*. The notion of a ventriloquism such as this, of a *spirit* having his lodging *in the body* of a man, could only arise from a gross and entire confusion of the spiritual and material, and has been declared by great teachers of the Church not to be what they understand by this language. (SEC PET. LOMBARD, *Sentent.* l. 2, dist. 8.)

was so little an innocuous one, that might have been safely left to drop naturally away, was, on the contrary, one which reached so far in its consequences, entwined its roots so deeply among the very ground-truths of religion, that it could never have been suffered to remain at the hazard of all the misgrowths which it must needs have occasioned.

And then, moreover, even had not the matters at stake been so important, our idea of Christ's absolute veracity, apart from the value of the truth which he communicated, our idea of him as the *Verax*, no less than the *Verus* and the *Veritas*, will not permit us to suppose that he used the language which he did, well knowing that there was no answerable thing, on which the language was founded. And in this there is no making a conscience about gnats, nor denying that figurative nature of all our words, out of which it results that much which is not literally true, is yet most true, inasmuch as it conveys the truest impression,—no requiring men to look into the derivations of their words before they venture to use them. It had been one thing for the Lord to have fallen in with the popular language, and to have spoken of persons under various natural afflictions as “possessed;” supposing he had found such a language current, but now no longer, however once it might have been, vividly linked to the idea of possession by spirits of evil. This had been no more than our speaking of certain forms of madness as *lunacy*; not thereby implying that we believe the moon to have, or to have had, any influence upon them;\* but finding the word, we use it: and this the more readily, since its original derivation is so entirely lost sight of in our common conversation, its first impress so completely worn off, that we do not thereby even seem to countenance an error. But suppose with this same disbelief in lunar influences, we were to begin to speak not merely of lunatics, but of persons on whom the moon was working, to describe the cure of such, as the moon's ceasing to afflict them; or if a physician were solemnly to address the moon, bidding it to abstain from harming his patient, there would be here a passing over into quite a different region; we should be here directly countenancing superstition and delusion; and plainly speaking untruly with our lips; there would be that gulf between our thoughts and our words, in which the essence of a lie consists. Now Christ does every where speak in such a language as this. Take, for instance, his words, Luke xi. 17—26, and assume him as knowing, all the while he was thus speaking, that the whole Jewish

\* There are cases of lunambulism, in which no doubt it has influence; but they are few and exceptional. (See SCHUBERT, p. 113.) I am speaking of using the term to express all forms of mental unsoundness.

theory of demoniac possessions was utterly baseless, that there was no power of the kind which Satan exercised over the spirits of men, and what should we have here for a king of truth ?

And then, besides this, the phenomena themselves are such as no theory of the kind avails to explain, and they thus bid us to seek for some more satisfying solution. For that madness was not the constituent element in the demoniac state is clear, since not only we have not the slightest ground for supposing that the Jews would have considered all maniacs, epileptic or melancholic persons, to be under the power of evil spirits ; but we have distinct evidences that the same malady they did sometimes attribute to an evil spirit, and sometimes not, thus showing that the malady and possession were not identical in their eyes, and that the assumption of the latter was not a mere popular explanation for the presence of the former. Thus, on two occasions they bring to the Lord those that were dumb, (Matt. ix. 32 ; xii. 22 ; on the second occasion it is one dumb and blind ; ) and in each of these cases the dumbness is traced up to an evil spirit. Yet it is plain that they did not consider all dumbness as having this root ; for in the history given by St. Mark (vii. 32,) of one deaf and dumb, that was the subject of Christ's healing power, it is the evident intention of the Evangelist to describe one laboring only under a natural defect ; there is not the slightest appearance there of a desire to trace the source of his malady to any demoniacal influence. There were no doubt signs which were sufficiently distinct by which the different sources of the same defect were capable of being known : in the case of the demoniac there probably was not the outward hindrance, not the still-fastened string of the tongue ; it was not the outward organ, but the inward power of using the organ, which was at fault. This, with an entire apathy, a total disregard of all which was going on about him, may have sufficiently indicated that the cause of his malady lay deeper than on the surface. But, whatever may have been the signs which enabled those about the sufferers to make these distinctions, the fact itself that they did so discriminate between cases of the very same malady, proves decisively that there were not certain diseases which, without more ado, they attributed directly to Satan ; but that they did designate by this name of possession, a condition which, while it was very often a condition of disease, was also always a condition of much more than disease.

But what *was* the condition which our Lord and his apostles signalized by this name ? in what did it differ, upon the one side, from madness,—upon the other, from wickedness ? It will be impossible to make any advance toward the answer, without saying something, by way of preface, on the scriptural doctrine concerning the kingdom of evil, and

its personal head, and the relation in which he stands to the moral evil of our world. Alike excluding, on the one side, the Manichæan doctrine, which would make evil eternal as good, and so itself a god,—and the pantheistic, which would deny any true reality to evil at all, or that it is any thing else than good at a lower stage, the unripe and therefore still bitter fruit,—the Scripture teaches the absolute subordination of evil to good, and its subsequence of order, in the fact that the evil roots itself in a creature, and one created originally pure, but the good in the Creator. Yet, at the same time, it teaches that the opposition of this evil to the will of God is most real, is that of a will which does truly set itself against his will; that the world is not a chess-board on which God is in fact playing both sides of the game, however some of the pieces may be black and some white; but that the whole end of his government of the world is the subduing of this evil; that is, not abolishing it by main force, which were no true victory, but overcoming it by righteousness and truth. And from this one central will, alienated from the will of God, the Scripture derives all the evil in the universe; all gathers up in a person, in the devil, who has most truly a kingdom, as God has,—a kingdom with its subordinate ministers,—“the devil and his angels.”\* This world of ours stands not isolated, not rounded and

\* The devil, the central power of evil, is never in Scripture called δαίμων or δαιμόνιον, nor yet, on the other hand, his inferior ministers διαβολοί. In regard of the words δαιμόνιον and δαίμων, the first is in the New Testament of far the most frequent occurrence, being used sixty times, while δαίμων occurs but five times. The words are not perhaps perfectly equivalent; but there is more of personality implied in δαίμων than δαιμόνιον. Other terms are πνεῦμα πονηρόν, πνεῦμα ἀκαθάρτων, πνεῦμα δαιμονίου ἀκαθάρτου, and at Matt. viii. 16, they are simply τὰ πνεύματα. The word δαίμων (=δαήμων) is either derived from δᾶω, *scio*, and then signifies “the knowing,” the full of insight, (in oldest Greek δάρων,) while to know is the special prerogative of spiritual beings; (ob scientiam nominati, AUGUSTINE, *De Civ. Dei*, l. 9, c. 20; as our English “witch” is perhaps from *wissen*, to know;) or else from δαίω, in its sense of to divide; the δαίμονες are then the *distributors*, the dividers and allotters of good and of evil to men, and δαίμων would thus be very much the same as *Μοῖρα*, derived from μέρος, a portion. And this derivation has its superiority in that ever a feeling of the *fateful* is linked with the word. Thus, the man to whom the epithet δαιμόνιος is applied, is one under an especial leading of the higher powers, whether that leading is to glory or to destruction. In classic use the word is of much wider significance than in scriptural, embracing all intermediate beings between men and the very highest divinities, whether the deified men of the golden age, or created and inferior powers; and, as well as δαιμόνιος, is a middle term, capable of being applied to the highest and the lowest, and first deriving from its adjunct a good or an evil significance; thus we have ἀγαθοδαίμων, κακοδαίμων. Yet Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, l. 59, c. 19,) observes, that in his time even among heathens the word had come to be used only *in malam partem*, which he attributes to the influence which the Church use of the word only in that

complete in itself, but in living relation with two worlds,—a higher, from which all good in it proceeds,—and this lower, from which all evil. Thus man's sin is continually traced up to Satan; Peter says to Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" (Acts v. 3;) and St. John, of Judas Iscariot, "The devil having now put into his heart to betray him," (John xiii. 3; cf. 1 John iii. 8; John viii. 41.) the Scripture not thereby denying that the evil of men is truly *their* evil, but affirming with this, that it has its ground in a yet higher evil. It is their evil, since it is an act of their will which alone gives it leave to enter. To each man the key is committed and the task given to keep closed the gate of his soul by which the enemy would enter. But it is also true that it is the existence of another world, of evil beyond and without our world, which makes all remissness here of such fatal and disastrous issue.

This being so, the question which presents itself is this, namely, what peculiar form of the working of these dark powers of hell Scripture designates by this title of demoniacal possessions. We have not here merely great sufferers; we have not in the demoniacs, as in the case of the victims of ghastly and horrible diseases, *only* specimens of the mighty woe which Satan has brought in upon our race through that sin common unto all; although we have such most truly. Nor yet, on the other hand, have we merely signal sinners, eminent servants of the devil, who with heart and will and waking consciousness are doing his work; for this, whatever their antecedent guilt may have been, and often, I should imagine, it had been great, the demoniacs evidently are not. But what strikes us most in them is the strange blending of the physical and the spiritual; the two regions are not kept separate; there is a breaking up of all the harmony of the lower, no less than of the higher life; the same disorder and disorganization manifests itself in both. This too is worthy of notice, that the demoniac does not, like the wicked, stand only in near relation to the kingdom of Satan as a whole; but his state is even as if out of the dark hosts of the abyss, one, or, it may be, more, had singled him out for their immediate prey; as when a lion or a leopard, not hunting merely a herd of flying antelopes, has fastened upon and is drinking out the life-blood of some one.

But how had this come to pass? how had men sunken into this woful state? been suffered to be entangled so far in the bands of the devil, or so fallen under the dominion of one or more of his angels? Now we should err, no doubt, and get altogether upon a wrong track, if

sense, had spread even beyond its own limits. On the Greek idea of the *daimones*, see Kreuzer's masterly discussion (*Symbolik*, part 3, pp. 719—748, 3rd edit.) and SOLGER'S *Nachgelassene Schriften*, v. 2, pp. 657—675.



we were to conceive of the demoniacs as the worst of men, and their possession as the plague and penalty of a wickedness in which they had eminently surpassed their fellows. Rather we must judge the demoniac one of the unhappiest, but not of necessity one of the most guilty, of our kind.\* On the contrary, the most eminent representatives and organs of Satan, false prophets and antichrists, are never spoken of in this language.† We all feel that Judas's possession, when Satan entered into him, (John xiii. 27,) was specifically different from that of one of the unhappy persons whom Christ came to deliver. Or, to borrow an illustration from the world of fiction, we should not speak of Iago as *δαίμονιζόμενος*, however all the deadliest malignity of hell was concentrated in him; much more nearly we should find analogies to this state in some moments of Hamlet's life. The Greek poet will supply us with a yet apter example; it is the noble Orestes, whom the "dogs of hell" torture into madness; the obdurate Clytemnestra is troubled on account of *her* deed with no such spectres of the unseen world. Thus, too, in

\* This is exactly Heinroth's exaggeration, tracing up, as he does, insanity in every case to foregoing sin; and not this alone, but affirming, that none who had not fallen deeply away from God could be liable to this infliction, that in fact they are those who have fallen from him the most utterly, the outermost circle of them who have obeyed the centrifugal impulses of sin. But every one who knows what manner of persons have been visited by this terrible calamity, and also what manner of persons have *not*, at once revolts against this doctrine stated in this breadth and thus without qualification. Yet, at the same time, his unquestionable merit remains, that more distinctly, I believe, than any other had yet done, he dared to say out that such cases were to be looked at as standing in a different, and *oftentimes* far nearer, connection to the kingdom of evil than a fever or a broken limb. The mere fact that the treatment of insanity is more and more allowed on all sides to be a moral treatment, and the physical remedies to be merely subsidiary to this, that almost alone out of this its removal may be hoped, should be alone sufficient to put it in wholly another class from every other disease. The attempt to range it with them is merely the attempt natural enough in those who know not the grace of God in Christ, to avoid looking down into the awful deeps of our fallen nature. For a list of Heinroth's works, almost all bearing upon this subject, see the *Conversations-Lexicon* in the article on his name. In speaking on such a subject he had the inestimable advantage of being at once a theologian and physician. For Schubert's more qualified opinion on the same subject see his *Krankheiten und Störungen der menschlichen Seele*, p. 37.

† So the accusation of the people, "Thou hast a devil," (John vii. 20; viii. 48, 52; x. 20,) was quite different from, and betrayed infinitely less deadly malignity than, that of the Pharisees, that he cast out devils by Beelzebub. (Matt. xii. 24) That first was a common coarse blasphemy, a stone flung at random; this, which charged him with being in willing alliance with the prince of evil, was on the very verge of being the sin against the Holy Ghost (ver. 31). The distinction between the wicked and the demoniac was clearly recognized in the early Church; it had its excommunications for the first, its exorcists for the last.

many cases of actual life, the deep anguish of the sinner in the contemplation of his sin may have helped on this overthrow of his spiritual life,—anguish which a more hardened sinner would have escaped, but escaped it only by being a worse and more truly devilish man; so that in these cases of possession we are not to see the deliberate giving in to the satanic will, of an utterly lost soul, but the still irrecoverable wreck of that which oftentimes was once a noble spirit.

And, consistently with this, we find in the demoniac the sense of a misery in which he does not acquiesce, the deep feeling of inward discord, of the true life utterly shattered, of an alien power which has mastered him wholly, and now is cruelly lording over him, and ever drawing farther away from him in whom only any created intelligence can find rest and peace. His state is in the truest sense of the word “a possession:” another is ruling in the high places of his soul, and has cast down the rightful lord from his seat; and he knows this; and out of his consciousness of it there goes forth from him a cry for redemption, so soon as ever a glimpse of hope is afforded, an unlooked-for Redeemer draws near. This sense of misery, this yearning after deliverance, was, in fact, what made these demoniacs objects and subjects for Christ’s healing power. Without it they would have been as little objects of this as the devils, who are complete and circular in evil, in whom there is nothing for the divine grace to take hold of;—so that even in their case, as in every other, faith was the condition of healing. There was in them a spark of higher life, not yet trodden out, which, indeed, so long as they were alone, was but light enough to reveal to them their darkness; and which none but the very Lord of life could have fanned again into a flame. But He, who came to dissolve the works of the devil, as he showed himself lord over purely physical evil, a healer of the diseases of men, and lord also of purely spiritual evil, a deliverer of men from their sins,—he showed himself also lord in these complex cases partaking of the nature of either, ruler also in this border land, where these two regions of evil join, and run so strangely and unaccountably one into the other.

Yet while thus “men possessed with devils” is not at all an equivalent expression for eminently wicked men, born of the serpent seed, of the devil’s regeneration, and so become children of the devil, seeing that in such there is no cry for redemption, no desire after deliverance, yet should it, I think, always on the other hand be held fast, that lavish sin, and especially indulgence in sensual lusts, superinducing as it would often a weakness in the nervous system, which is the especial band between body and soul, may have laid open these unhappy ones to the fearful incursions of the powers of darkness. They were greatly guilty, though not the guiltiest of men. And this they felt, that by their own

act they had given themselves over to this tyranny of the devil, a tyranny from which, as far as their horizon reached, they could see no hope of deliverance,—that it was to themselves they owed that this hellish might was no longer *without* them, no longer something against which they could shut the door, which if it was resisted would flee from them; but a power which now they could not resist and which would not flee.

The phenomena which the demoniacs of Scripture, especially those now before us, exhibit, entirely justify this view of the real presence of another will upon the will of the sufferer—not merely influences which had little by little moulded and modified his will and brought it into subjection, but a power which he, even at the very moment that it is using him, feels to be the contradiction of his truest being; which yet has forced itself upon him, and from which now he cannot defend himself—but is compelled to speak and act merely as the organ of that devilish might which possesses him, however presently again his personal consciousness may reassert itself for a moment.\* This, that they have not become indissolubly one, that the serpent and the man have not, as in Dante's awful image, grown together, “each melted into other,”† but that they still are twain; this is, indeed, the redemptive fact which survives amid the ruin of their moral and spiritual being. Yet does it, for the actual time being, give the appearance, though a deceptive one, of a far entirer wreck of their life, than manifests itself in wicked men, who have given themselves over wholly, without reserve and without reluc-

\* How remarkable in accesses of *delirium tremens*, which, as is well known, is the scourge of lavish indulgence in intoxicating drinks, to find something analogous to this double consciousness. A late work describing the victim of this, expresses itself thus: “In the most tranquil and collected moments he is not to be trusted; for the transition from that state to the greatest violence is instantaneous: he is often recalled by a word to an apparent state of reason, but as quickly his false impressions return; *there is sometimes evidence, at the time, of a state of double consciousness*, a condition of mind which is sometimes remembered by the patient when the paroxysm is over.” (BRIGHT and ADDISON, *On the Practice of Medicine*, v. 1, p. 262.) And Gfrörer, a German rationalist, is struck with a like phenomenon in others. He says, in his book *Das Heiligthum und die Wahrheit*, Stuttgart, 1838, p. 302: Auch scheue ich mich trotz allen Aufklärern nicht zu bemerken, das neuerdings hier zu Lande gar seltsame Erscheinungen der Art beobachtet worden sind, und wenn ich recht unterrichtet bin, so hat die höchste ärztliche Behörde in Würtemberg, der solche Fälle vorgelegt wurden, dahin entschieden, dass es allerdings Krankheiten geben könne, durch welche zwei Bewusstseyn in den Menschen entstehen, so zwar das der Betroffene überzeugt ist, neben seinem Ich noch ein Anderes mit Gewalt eingedrungenes in sich zu haben. In a note he adds, Mein Gewährsmann ist, ausser mehreren Anderen, ein Mann, den ich genau kenne, von kaltem Verstande, unbefangen, wahrhaftig, ein mathematischer Kopf.

† DANTE, *Inferno*, Canto 25.

tancy, to do evil with both hands earnestly. In these last, by the very completeness of their loss, there is a unity, a harmony, if one may dare to use the word ; there are no merest incoherencies, no violent contradictions at every instant emerging in their words and in their conduct ; they are at one with themselves. But all these incoherencies and self-contradictions we trace in the demoniac ; he rushes to the feet of Jesus, as coming to him for aid, and then presently he deprecates his interference. There is not in him one vast contradiction to the true end of his being, consistently worked out, but a thousand lesser contradictions, in the midst of which the true idea of his life, not wholly obscured, does yet sometimes by fitful glimpses reappear. There is on his part an occasional reluctancy against this usurpation by another of his spirit's throne—a protest, which for the present, indeed, but augments the confusion of his life—yet which contains in it the pledge of a possible freedom and order, which may be given back to that life at a future time.

There is one objection to this view of the matter which may still be urged, namely, that if this possession is any thing more than insanity in its different forms, how comes it to pass that there are no demoniacs now ? that they have wholly disappeared from the world ? But the assumption that there are none, is itself one demanding to be proved. It is not hard to perceive why there should be few by comparison ; why this form of spiritual evil should have lost greatly both in frequency and malignity, and from both these causes be far more difficult to recognize. For in the first place, if there was any thing that marked the period of the Lord's coming in the flesh, and that immediately succeeding, it was the wreck and confusion of men's spiritual life which was then, the sense of utter disharmony, the hopelessness, the despair which must have beset every man that thought at all,—this, with the tendency to rush with a frantic eagerness into sensual enjoyments as the refuge from despairing thoughts. That whole period was the hour and power of darkness—of a darkness, which then immediately before the dawn of a new day, was the thickest. The world was again a chaos, and the creative words, "Let there be light," though just about to be spoken, as yet were not uttered. It was exactly the crisis for such soul maladies as these, in which the spiritual and bodily should be thus strangely interlinked, and it is nothing wonderful that they should have abounded at that time ; for the predominance of certain spiritual maladies at certain epochs of the world's history which were specially fitted for their generation, with their gradual decline and disappearance in others less congenial to them, is a fact itself admitting no manner of question.\*

\* It has been remarkably traced by Hecker, in three valuable treatises which have

Moreover we cannot doubt that the might of hell has been greatly broken by the coming of the Son of God in the flesh; and with this the grosser manifestations of its power; "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." (Luke x. 18.) We believe that his rage and violence are continually hemmed in and hindered by the preaching of the Word and ministration of the Sacraments. It were another thing even now in a heathen land, especially in one where Satan was not left in undisturbed possession, but wherein the great crisis of the conflict between light and darkness was finding place through the first incoming there of the Gospel of Christ. There we should expect very much to find, whether or not in such great intensity, yet manifestations analogous to these. There is a very interesting communication from Rhenius, the Lutheran missionary,\* in which he gives this as exactly his experience in India,—that among the native Christians, even though many of them walk not as children of light, yet there is not this falling under Satanic influence in soul and body, which he traced frequently in the heathen around him; and he shows by a remarkable example, and one in which he is himself the witness throughout, how the assault in the name of Jesus on the kingdom of darkness, as it brings out all forms of devilish opposition into fiercest activity, so calls out the endeavor to counterwork the truth through men who have been made direct organs of the devilish will.

It may well be a question moreover, if an apostle, or one with apostolic discernment of spirits, were to enter now into one of our mad-houses, how many of the sufferers there he might not recognize as thus having more immediately fallen under the tyranny of the powers of darkness. Certainly in many cases of mania and epilepsy there is a condition very analogous to that of the demoniacs, though the sufferer, and commonly the physician, apprehend it differently.† Yet this apprehension of theirs is not of the essence of the matter; this will but be in general the reflection of the popular notion of the age about it. Thus no doubt the Jews multiplied quite unnecessarily the numbers of the possessed, counting as they did, among the cases of possession, many

been translated into English under this common title, *On the Epidemics of the Middle Ages*. In treating of the terrible Dancing Mania, he has clearly shown how there are centuries open to peculiar inflictions of these kinds; how they root themselves in a peculiar temperament which belongs to men's minds in those ages; and how when they disappear, or become rare and lose their intensity, their very existence is denied by the skeptical ignorance of a later age. (pp. 87—152.)

\* It is of the date March 27, 1818, and is printed in Von Meyer's *Blätter für höhere Wahrheit*, v. 7, p. 199—208.

† I understand that Esquirol, for I have not had an opportunity of myself consulting his works, recognizes demoniacs now. There could not be a higher authority.

lower forms of disharmony in the inner life ; so too I should believe it was in the early Church, and many then who had not fallen under this immediate tyranny of the devil, may yet have traced up their sufferings directly to him. Now, however, the popular feeling which the unhappy man brings with him into his forlorn state sets the opposite way, and in agreement with this is the language which he uses. But the case which is now before us is one in which no question can exist, since the great Physician himself treats and declares it as one of a veritable possession.

There is something very striking in the connection in which this miracle stands with that other which went immediately before. Our Lord has just shown himself as the pacifier of the tumults and the discords in the outward world ; he has spoken peace to the winds and to the waves, and hushed with a word the elemental war. But there is something wilder and more fearful than the winds and the waves in their fiercest moods—even the spirit of man, when it has broken loose from all restraints and yielded itself to be the organ not of God, but of him who brings uttermost confusion wheresoever his dominion reaches. And Christ will do here a yet mightier work than that which he accomplished there ; he will prove himself here also the Prince of Peace, the bringer back of the lost harmony ; he will speak, and at his potent word this madder strife, this blinder rage which is in the heart of man, will allay itself ; and here also there shall be a great calm.

In seeking to combine the accounts given us of this memorable healing, this difficulty meets us at the outset,\* namely, that St. Matthew

\* There is another difficulty also, namely, that St. Matthew should lay the scene of the miracle in the country of the Gergesenes, St. Mark and St. Luke in that of the Gadarenes. But the MSS. in all three Evangelists vary in their reading between Γαδανηῶν, Γερασηῶν, and Γεργεσηῶν, so that it is impossible to say that there is any even apparent contradiction here. Lachmann, for instance, finds none, who, certainly not with any motive of excluding such, reads Γερασηῶν throughout, which was the reading Origen found in most MSS. of his day. Fritschze, in like manner, reads every where Γαδανηῶν, which Winer also prefers. (*Real Wörterbuch*, s. v. Gadara.) This reading, Origen says, was not in many MSS. of his time ; yet there seems hardly a doubt that it is the right one ; for Gadara, the capital city of Peræa, lay s. e. of the southern point of Gennesareth, at a distance of not more than 60 stadia from Tiberias, its country being called Γαδαῖτις. But Gerasa lay on the extreme eastern limit of Peræa, so as sometimes to be numbered among the cities of Arabia, and much too far distant to give its name to any district on the borders of the lake. Origen, therefore, on topographic motives, proposes Γεργεσα ; but no evidence seems adducible, except his assertion, to prove the existence of any city bearing that name in the neighborhood of the lake. Josephus never makes mention of it. If there did lie any difference in

speaks of two demoniacs, while St. Mark and St. Luke speak only of one. Many explanations of this have been offered, as that one was a more notable person in the country than the other; or that one was so much more savage as to cause the other, by most persons, hardly to be taken note of; which is that of Maldonatus.\* Whatever may have been the cause, it is, I think, evident, that one did fall into the background; and, therefore, following the more detailed account of St. Mark and St. Luke, I shall speak in the main as they do, of the one demoniac who met the Lord as he came out of the ship;—not in the least as though the other was not present: but the accounts of St. Mark and St. Luke, where there appears but one, being those which, as the fullest, I desire mainly to follow, it would be full of continual embarrassment to use any other language.

The picture of the miserable man is fearful; and in drawing it, each Evangelist has some touches which are peculiarly his own; but St. Mark's is the most eminently graphic of all, adding as it does many strokes which wonderfully heighten the terribleness of the man's condition, and so also magnify the glory of his cure. The man had his dwelling among the tombs, that is, in unclean places, unclean because of the dead men's bones which were there. To those who did not on this account shun them, these tombs of the Jews would afford ample shelter, being either natural caves, or recesses hewn by art out of the rock, often so large as to be supported with columns, and with cells upon their sides for the reception of the dead.† Being, too, without the cities, and oftentimes in remote and solitary places, they would attract those who sought to flee from all fellowship of their kind.‡ This man

the original readings, it would probably be explained thus, that the limits of the territory, which might be said to belong to each city, were not very accurately determined, so that one Evangelist called it the country of one city, and another of another.

\* Augustine (*De Cons. Evang.*, l. 2, c. 24): *Intelligas unum eorum fuisse personæ alicujus clarioris et famosioris, quem regio illa maximè dolebat.* So Theophylact, that one was *ἑπισημοτέρως*, and Grotius. See another solution in LIGURFOOT'S *Exercit. on St. Mark*, (in loc.) It remained for a modern interpreter, Ammon, in his *Biblische! Theologie*, to conjecture that the two were the madman and his keeper. It is remarkable that in the same way St. Matthew makes mention of two blind men, (xx. 30,) where the others make mention only of one. (Mark x. 46; Luke xviii. 35.)

† Burchardt and other travellers mention many such tombs on the further side of the lake, and in the immediate neighborhood of the spot where Gadara stood, as existing to this present day.

‡ Hävernick, on Daniel iv. 33, quotes *Ætius, De Melancholiâ*, l. 3, c. 8; where of the melancholy-mad he says, *οἱ πλείους ἐν σκοταίνοις τόποις χιρῶναι διατρέβειν, καὶ ἐν μνήμασι, καὶ ἐν ἐσθήμοις.* And Warburton (in *The Crescent and the Cross*, v. 2, p. 352,) remarkably illustrates this account: On descending from these heights [those of Leba-

was possessed of that extraordinary muscular strength which maniacs so often put forth, (compare Acts xix. 16,) and thus all efforts to bind and restrain him, (and such had often been repeated,) had proved ineffectual. (Mark v. 6.) St. Matthew alone relates how he had made the way impassable for travellers; St. Luke alone that he was without clothing,\* although this is involved in St. Mark's account, who tells us that after he was healed he was found "*clothed, and in his right mind,*" sitting at Jesus' feet. Yet with all this, he was not so utterly lost, but that there evermore woke up in him a sense of his misery, and of the terrible bondage under which he had come, although this could express itself only in his cries, and in a blind rage against himself, out of which he wounded and cut himself with stones,† recognizing no doubt his own evil will as that which had given entrance to this terrible host of Satanic influences into his inmost being.‡

From such a one as this did the Lord receive his first greeting on those shores which now, probably for the first time, his feet were treading. This man with his companion starting from the tombs, which were their ordinary dwelling-place, rushed down to encounter, it may have been with hostile violence, the intruders that had dared to set foot on their domain. Or it may have been that they were at once drawn to Christ by the secret instinctive feeling that he was their helper, and driven from him by the sense of the awful gulf that divided them from him, the Holy One of God. At any rate, if it *was* with purposes of violence, ere the man reached him his mind was changed: "*for he had commended the*

non], I found myself in *a cemetery*, whose sculptured turbans showed me that the neighboring village was Moslem. The silence of night was now broken *by fierce yells and howlings*, which I discovered proceeded from a *naked maniac*, who was fighting with some wild dogs for a bone. The moment he perceived me, he left his canine comrades, and bounding along with rapid strides, seized my horse's bridle, and almost forced him backward over the cliff, by the grip he held of the powerful Mameluke bit."

\* Pritchard (*On Insanity*, p. 26.) quotes from an Italian physician's description of raving madness or mania: "A striking and characteristic circumstance is the propensity to go quite naked. The patient tears his clothes to tatters," and presently, in exact accordance with the description we have here: "Notwithstanding his constant exertion of mind and body, the muscular strength of the patient seems daily to increase. He is able to break the strongest bonds, and even chains."

† Pritchard (*On Insanity*, p. 113,) describing a case of raving mania:—"He habitually wounded his hands, wrists, and arms, with needles and pins; . . . the blood sometimes flowed copiously, dropping from his elbows when his arms were bare."

‡ A fearful commentary on the words of St. Peter, who describes such as this man as being *καταδυναστευμένους ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου*. (Acts x. 38.) An apocryphal allusion to this miracle adds one circumstance more, that they gnawed their own flesh: *σαρκοφαγοῦντας τῶν ἰδίων μελῶν*. (THELO'S *Cod. Apocryph.*, v. i. p. 808.)



unclean spirit to come out of the man,"\* (Luke viii. 29,) and the unclean spirit had recognized one that had a right to command, with whom force would avail nothing; and, like others on similar occasions, sought by a strong adjuration to avert his coming doom. He "*cried with a loud voice, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?*" that is, "What have we in common? why interferest thou with us? why wilt thou not let us alone? *I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not.*"† Herein the true devilish spirit speaks out, which counts it a torment not to be suffered to torment others, and an injury done to itself, when it is no more permitted to be injurious to others. In St. Matthew they say, "*Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?*" in which last words, "*before the time,*" is the confession upon their part of a time coming, a time, too, not to be averted, when there shall be an entire victory of the kingdom of light over that of darkness, and when all which belong unto the latter shall be shut up in the abyss, (Rev. xx. 10;) when all power of harming shall be taken away from them, and they shall acquiesce in their inevitable doom. And all Scripture agrees with this, that the judgment of the angels is yet to come, (1 Cor. vi. 3;) they are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day;" (Jude 6;) and what the unclean spirits deprecate here, is the bringing in, by anticipation, of that final doom.

But this is here noticeable, that the first bidding of Christ is not immediately obeyed;—that the evil spirits remonstrate, and do not at once quit their hold. No doubt the Lord could have forced them to do so had he willed, but the man might have perished in the process. (Cf. Mark ix. 24.) Even that first bidding had brought on a terrible paroxysm. It was then of Christ's own will, of the Physician's, wise and tender as he was strong, to proceed step by step. And, first, he demands

\* In the same way Mark v. 8, should be taken parenthetically, and as a plusqu. perfect — For he *had* said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit."

† Baur (*Apollonius von Tyana und Christus*, p. 145,) observes the remarkable resemblance which the narrative in the *Life of Apollonius*, (l. 4, c. 25,) of the demon which sought vainly to avert its doom, and at length yielded to the threatening words of Apollonius, and abandoned the young man of Coreyra, has with the present. Apollonius exercises there the same tormenting, and by the demon irresistible, might. A resemblance may be traced even in the very words. As the possessed exclaims here, *Τί ἐμοί καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ, οὐκ ἔστι τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἰψιστοῦ; εἰσραὶ σον, μή με βασανίσῃς*, so there of the Lamia it is said, *δακρόντι ἐφέκει τὸ φάσμα, καὶ ἔδειτο μή βασανίσῃ αὐτὸ, μηδὲ ἀναγκάζῃ ὁμολογεῖν, ᾧ, τι εἴη.* He does not doubt that that narrative was fashioned in imitation of this. The expulsion of a demon recorded c. 20 of the same book, has more remarkable points of resemblance; and he might have referred to another expulsion, (l. 3, c. 38,) in which many features of the father's intercession for his lunatic son, (Matt. xvii.) and of the Syrophœnician mother for her absent daughter, appear curiously blended together.

of him his name,—some say for magnifying the greatness of the deliverance and the Deliverer, by showing, through the answer, the power and strength of the foe that was overcome. But, most probably, the question was directed to the man, and was for the purpose of calming him, by bringing him to recollection, to the consciousness of his personality, of which a man's name is the outward expression,—that he was a person who had once been apart from, and was not now inextricably intertwined with those spiritual wickednesses now lordling over him. The question might thus have been intended to facilitate his cure.\* But if so meant, either the evil spirit snatches at the answer and replies for himself, or the unhappy man, instead of recurring to his true name, that which should remind him of what he was before he fell under the dominion of these alien powers, in this reply, “*My name is Legion, for we are many,*”—a reply in which truth and error are fearfully blended,—declares his sense of the utter ruin of his whole moral and spiritual being. Not on one side only, but on every side, the walls of his spirit have been broken down; and he is laid open to all the incursions of evil, torn asunder in infinite ways, now under one hostile and hated power, now under another. The destruction is complete; they who rule over him are “lords many.” He can find no other way to express his state than in an image drawn from the reminiscences of his former life. He had seen the thick and serried ranks of a Roman legion, that fearful instrument of oppression, that sign of terror and fear to the conquered nations, and before which the Jew more especially quailed. Even such, at once one and many, cruel and inexorable and strong, were the powers that were tyrannizing over him.† When it is said of Mary Magdalene, that out of her had gone *seven* devils, (Luke viii. 2,) something of the same truth is expressed,—that her spiritual life was laid waste, not on one side only, but on many. (Cf. Matt. xii. 45.)

And then again, with that interchange of persons which was continually going forward, that quick shifting, so to speak, of the polarity, so that at one moment the human consciousness became the positive, at another the negative pole, the unclean spirit, or rather the man, become now his organ, speaks out anew, entreating not to be sent into the abyss.‡ (Luke viii. 31.) or clothing his petition in the form of a notion

\* It is well known that in cases of somnambulism, which must be regarded as a disorder, though in one of the mildest forms, of the spiritual life, the sleep-walker, when every thing else fails, may often be awakened and recalled to a healthy state of consciousness through being addressed by his name. (SCHUBERT'S *Krankheiten und Störungen der menschl. Seele*, p. 368.)

† See OLSHAUSEN'S *Commentary* (in loc.)

‡ *Εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον*,—unhappily translated in our version, “into the deep,” so leaving

which belonged to the man whom he possessed, not to be sent away out of the country. (Mark v. 8.) The request is in each case the same, for, according to Jewish notions, certain countries being assigned to evil as well as good spirits, and they being unable to overpass their limits, to be sent out of the assigned country, no other being open to them, would amount to the same thing as being sent into the abyss, since that alone would remain for them. This request is in fact a repetition of their prayer that they should not be tormented before the time.

Hereupon follows a circumstance that has ever proved one of the chiefest stumbling-blocks which men have found in the Evangelical history. The devils, if they must leave their more welcome habitation, the heart of man, if indeed the Stronger is come, binding the strong and spoiling his goods, taking his thralls out of his power, yet entreat, in their inextinguishable desire of harming, that they may be allowed to enter into the swine, of which a large herd,—St. Mark, with his usual punctuality, notes that they were “*about two thousand*,”—were feeding on the neighboring cliffs. But to the evil all things turn to harm. God’s saints and servants appear not to be heard; and the very refusal of their requests is to them a blessing. (2 Cor. xii. 7.) The wicked, Satan (Job i. 11,) and his ministers and servants, are sometimes heard, and the very granting of their petitions issues in their greater confusion and loss.\* So was it now: these evil spirits had their prayer heard; but only to their ruin. They are allowed to enter into the swine;† but the destruction of the whole herd follows; and that which they dreaded would seem to have come upon them; no longer finding organs in which or through which to work, they are driven perforce to the abysmal deep, which they most would have shunned.

room for a confusion with what follows, where the swine under their influence rush down into the *sea*. Wielif’s was better, “Thei preieden hym that he schulde not comande hem, that they schulden go in to hell.” With a like liability to confusion, it is translated “the deep,” Rom. x. 7, where also “hell,” meaning by that word Hades, in its most comprehensive sense, including the place for the gathering of the departed as well as the *φυλακί*, the abode of evil spirits, would have been better. Besides these two places, the word only occurs in Revelations, but there several times, as ix. 1, 2, 11; xi. 7; xvii. 8; xx. 1, 3, where it plainly means only the last, the *τάραρος* (2 Pet. ii. 4.) = *γίεσσα*. The word is properly an adjective from *βυσσός*, Ionic for *βυθός*. So Euripides (*Phænissæ*, v. 1632,) *ταράρον ἄβυσσα χάσματα*.

\* See Augustine’s excellent words in *Ep. Joh. Tract.* 6, 7, 8.

† The matter is so plain as hardly to be worth noticing, that Christ did not *send* the devils into the swine; he drove them out from the men; all beyond was merely permissive. Thus Augustine: *Expulsa et in porcos permissa dæmonia*; and Aquinas: *Quod autem porci in mare præcipitati sunt, non fuit operatio divini miraculi, sed operatio dæmonum e permissione divinâ.*

Now the first difficulty, the destruction of the swine, one of the same order as that of the withering of the fig-tree through Christ's word, (Matt. xxi. 19,) is hardly worth noticing. A man is of more value than many swine. And if this granting of the request of the evil spirits helped in any way the cure of the man, caused them to resign their hold on him more easily, mitigated the paroxysm of their going forth, (cf. Mark ix. 26,) this would have been motive enough. Or still more probably, it may have been necessary for the permanent healing of the man that he should have an outward evidence and testimony that the hellish powers which held him in bondage had quitted him. He wanted his deliverance sealed and realized to him in the open destruction of his enemies; not else would he have been persuaded of the truth of that deliverance, and that Christ had indeed and for ever set him free: as the children of Israel, coming out of Egypt, must see the dead bodies of their oppressors on the shore, ere they could indeed believe that these never again should bring them back into their old bondage.

In regard, too, of the loss incurred by the owners of those swine, there is no more reason why this should have been laid hold of and made an object of cavil than every murrain that causes cattle to die, or inundation that destroys the fruits of the field, or other natural calamity with which God chastens his children, punishes, or seeks to make contrite the hearts of his enemies. For oftentimes the taking away by God is in a higher sense a giving; it is the taking away of the meaner thing, for the purpose of making receptive of the higher. Thus might it well have been intended here, however the sin of these Gadarenes hindered Christ's gracious design. If these herds belonged to Jewish owners, and we know from Josephus, that there were great multitudes of hellenizing Jews just in these parts, there may have been in this loss a punishment meant for them who from motives of gain showed themselves despisers of Moses' law. Yet a great part of the population of the Decapolis was certainly Gentile; Josephus calls Gadara itself a Greek city.\*

But again, it seems strange that the unclean spirits ask permission to enter into the swine, yet no sooner have they done so than they defeat their own purpose, destroying that animal life, from which if they be altogether driven, they have already confessed they will be obliged to betake them to the more detested place of their punishment. But it is nowhere said that they *drove* the swine down the steep place into the sea. It is just as easy, and much more natural, to understand that against their will the swine, when they found themselves seized by this new and strange power, rushed themselves in wild and panic fear to their destruction,—the first leaping down the cliffs, and the rest blindly following.

\* *Antt.*, 17. 11, 4.

And be it that the creatures thus rushed themselves to their own destruction, or were impelled by the foul spirits, does there not here in either case come out the very essence of evil in its truest manifestation, that it is evermore outwitted and defeats itself, being as inevitably scourged in the granting of its requests as in their refusal ; that it is stupid, blind, self-contradicting, and suicidal ; that it can only destroy, and will rather involve itself in the common ruin than not destroy ?

Moreover in their blind hatred against the Lord they may have been content to bring this additional harm, whatsoever it was, upon themselves, in the hopes that by this act they would bring upon him the ill-will, as was actually the case, of the inhabitants of that region, and so limit and hinder his blessed work among them. And this no doubt they did, for it was fear of further losses, and alienation from Christ on account of that which through his presence had already befallen them, which was the motive for their urging him to leave their country.

But the question offering more real matter for consideration is the *entering in* of the devils into the swine,—the working of the spiritual life on the bestial, which seems altogether irreceptive of it, and not to possess the organs through which it could operate. I put aside of course here, as both in themselves merely ridiculous, and irreconcilable with the documents as they lie before us, the solutions of Paulus and his compeers, that the demoniac, in the parting paroxysm of his madness, hunted the creatures over the precipices into the lake, or that while the swineherds were drawn by curiosity to watch the encounter between Christ and the demoniac, or had gone to warn him of the danger of meeting the madman, the untended herd fell a fighting, and so tumbled headlong over the crags.

Whatever difficulty is here, it certainly is not so to be evaded ; and their perplexity at any rate claims to be respectfully treated, who find it hard to reconcile this incident with what else they have been taught to hold fast as most precious concerning the specific difference between man and the whole order of spiritual existences on the one side, and the animal creation on the other. This difficulty, however, proceeds on the assumption that that lower world is wholly shut up in itself, and incapable of receiving impressions from that which is above it ; while certainly all deeper investigations would lead to an opposite conclusion,—not to the breaking down the boundaries between the two worlds, but to the showing in what wonderful ways the lower is subject to the impressions of the higher, both for good and for evil.\* Nor does this work-

\* Kieser, certainly a man who would not go out of his way that he might bring his theory into harmony with Scripture facts, distinctly recognizes (in his *Tellurismus*, v.

ing of the spiritual on the physical life stand isolated in this single passage of Scripture, but we are throughout taught the same lesson. Compare Gen. iii. 17 with Rom. viii. 18.

All three Evangelists record the entreaty of the Gadarenes, so unlike that which the Samaritans (John iv. 40) made to our Lord, "*that he would depart out of their coasts,*"—an entreaty which surely had not, as Jerome and others suppose, its roots in their humility, was in no respect a parallel to St. Peter's, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man," (Luke v. 8;) but, as already observed, was provoked by the injury which already from his brief presence among them, had ensued to their worldly possessions, as perhaps by the greater losses which they feared. This was their trial: it was now to be seen whether the kingdom of heaven was the first thing in their esteem; whether they would hold all else as cheap by comparison: so that in this aspect the destruction of the swine had in regard of them an ethical aim. It was their trial, for the discovering of what temper they were; and under this trial they failed. It was nothing to them that a man, probably a fellow-citizen, was delivered from that terrible bondage, that they saw him "*sitting at the feet of Jesus,*" receiving instruction from him, (Luke x. 39; Acts xxxii. 3.) "*clothed and in his right mind.*"\* The breach that was made in their worldly prosperity alone occupied their thoughts: for spiritual blessings that were brought near to them they cared nothing, and "*they were afraid,*" they knew not what next might follow. They only knew that the presence of God's Holy One was intolerable to them while they re-

2, p. 72.) with reference to this present miracle, the possibility of the passing over of demoniac conditions upon others, and even upon animals (die Möglichkeit eines Uebergangs dämonischer Zustände auf Andere, und selbst auf Thiere.) How remarkable in this respect are well-authenticated cases of clairvoyance, in which the horse is evidently by its terror and extreme agitation and utter refusal to advance, a partaker of the vision of its rider. (See PASSAVANT'S *Unterss. üb d. Hellschen*, p. 316.) And indeed in our common life the horse, and the dog no less, are eminently receptive of the spiritual conditions of their appointed lord and master, Man. With what electric swiftness does the courage or fear of the rider pass into the horse; and so too the gladness or depression of its master is almost instantaneously reflected and reproduced in his faithful dog. It is true that we should expect, as we should find, far less of this in the grosser nature of swine than in those creatures of nobler races. Yet the very fierceness and grossness of these animals may have been exactly that which best fitted them for receiving such impulses from the lower world as those under which they perished.

\* Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* l. 2, qu. 13): *Significat multitudinem venustâ suâ vitâ delectatam, honorate quidem sed nolle pati Christianam legem, dum dicunt quod eam implere non possunt, admirantes tamen fidelem populum à pristinâ perditâ conversatione sanatum.* The name *Gergeseni* has been often since given to those who will not endure sound doctrine. (ERASMI *Adagia*, p. 313.)

mained in their sins, and to them, so remaining, could only bring mischiefs, of which they had had the first experience already. And having no desire to be delivered from their sins, they "*besought him to depart from them, for they were taken with great fear.*" And their prayer also was heard; he did depart; he took them at their word; he let them alone.\* (Cf. Exod. x. 28, 29.)

But the healed man would fain accompany his healer: and as Christ was stepping into the ship to return, entreated that he might be allowed to bear him company. Was it that he feared, as Theophylact supposes, lest in the absence of his deliverer the powers of hell should regain their dominion over him, and only felt safe in immediate nearness to him?—or merely that out of the depth of his gratitude he desired henceforth to be a follower of him to whom he owed this mighty benefit? But whatever was his motive the Lord had other purposes with him: though he was himself leaving them who were as yet unfitted to welcome him, he would not leave himself without a witness among them. This healed man should be a standing monument of his grace and power,—that he would have healed them, and was willing to heal them still, of all the diseases of their souls: "*Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.*"† And the man did so, and not without effect: "*He departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him; and all men did marvel.*"‡

\* Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps. cxxxvi. 3.*) has a noble passage on what the world calls prosperity; which when Christ interrupts, then the world counts that he has brought nothing good, and would fain have him depart from it, if it might: *Vides enim si theatra et amphitheatra et circi starent incolumes, si nihil caderet de Babyloniâ, si ubertas esset circumfluentium voluptatum hominibus cantaturis et saltaturis ad turpia cantica, si libido scortantium et meretricantium haberet quietem et securitatem, si non timeret famem in domo suâ qui clamat ut pantomimi vestiantur, si hæc omnia sine labe, sine perturbatione aliquâ fluerent, et esset securitas magna nugarum, felicia essent tempora, et magnam felicitatem rebus humanis Christus adtulisset. Quia verò cæduntur iniquitates, ut exstirpatâ cupiditate plantetur caritas Jerusalem, quia miscentur amaritudines vite temporali, ut æterna desideretur, quia crudiuntur in flagellis homines, paternam accipientes disciplinam, ne judiciaram inveniant sententiam: nihil boni adtulit Christus, et labores adtulit Christus.*

† Erasmus seems to me to be right when he connects ὄσα, not alone with ποιήσεν, but also with ἠλέησεν. Of course, in the second case, adverbially: Et quantopere miseratus sit tui. It is true that we should rather expect in such a case to have the ὄσα repeated, but there are abundant examples to justify the omission.

‡ Augustine (*Quæst. Evang., l. 2, c. 13*): Ut sic quisque intelligat post remissionem peccatorum redeundum sibi esse in conscientiam bonam, et serviendum Evangelio propter aliorum etiam salutem, ut deinde cum Christo requiescat; ne cum præproperè jam vult esse cum Christo, negligat ministerium prædicationis, fraternæ redemptioni accom-

Yet this command that he should go and declare the wonderful works of God in regard of him, may also have rested on other grounds, may have found its motive in the peculiar idiosyncrasy of the man. Only with reference to this state are we able to reconcile the apparently contradictory commands which the Lord gave to those whom he had healed:—some bidden to say nothing, (Matt. viii. 4 ; Luke viii. 56.)—this one to publish abroad the mercy which he had received. Where there was danger of all deeper impressions being lost and scattered through a garrulous repetition of the outward circumstances of the healing, there silence was enjoined, that so there might be an inward brooding over the gracious and mighty dealing of the Lord. But where, on the contrary, there was a temperament over-inclined to melancholy, sunken and shut up in itself, and needing to be drawn out from self, and into healthy communion with its fellow-men, as was evidently the case with such a solitary melancholic person as we have here, there the command was, that he should go and tell to others the great things which God had done for him, and in this telling preserve the healthy condition of his own soul.

modatum. He makes in the same place this whole account an historico-prophetic delineation of the exorcising, so to speak, of the heathen world of its foul superstitions and devilish idolatries.



## VI.

### THE RAISING OF JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER.

MATT. ix. 18, 19, 23—26 ; MARK v. 22, 24, 35—43 ; LUKE viii. 41, 42, 49—56.

THE present miracle is connected by St. Mark and St. Luke immediately with our Lord's return from the country on the other side of the lake, which he had left at the urgent entreaty of the inhabitants. In St. Matthew other events, the curing of the paralytic, the calling of Matthew, and some discourses of the Lord with the Pharisees, are inserted between. Yet of these only the latter (ix. 10—17,) the best harmonists find really to have their place here. The two later Evangelists tell us also the name of the father of the child; St. Matthew, who has his eye only on the main fact, and passes over every thing that is not absolutely necessary for that, speaks of him more generally as "*a certain ruler*;" they again telling us what kind of a ruler, namely that he was one of the prefects of the synagogue.\* This, we can hardly doubt, was the synagogue of Capernaum, where now Jesus was; (Matt. ix. 1;) he was therefore one who most probably afterwards made a part of that deputation which came to the Lord pleading for the heathen centurion; (Luke vii. 3;) for "the elders of the Jews" there, are identical with the "*rulers of the synagogue*" here.

But he who appears on that later occasion pleading for another, presents himself now before the Lord, touched by a yet nearer calamity; for he comes saying, "*My daughter is even now dead, but come and lay*

\* In Matthew simply ἄρχων, which is explained in Mark, εἰς τῶν ἀρχισυναγώγων, in Luke, ἄρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς. Many synagogues had but one of these, so it would seem Luke xiii. 14. The name itself seems to point out some single person, who was at the head of the whole; yet it is plain from this and many other passages, as Acts xiii. 15, that a synagogue often had many of these rulers. Probably those described as τοὺς ἄντας τῶν Ἰουδαίων προδτόνους, whom St Paul summoned at Rome, (Acts xxviii. 17,) were these chiefs of the synagogue. (See VITRINGA, *De Synagogâ*, p. 584, seq.)

thine hand upon her, and she shall live." Thus St. Matthew records his words, but the others with an important variation :—" *My little daughter lieth at the point of death.*"\* (Mark v. 23.) " *He had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying.*" (Luke viii. 42.) Thus they speak of her as dying when the father came, which the latter part of the history shows to have been the more exact, St. Matthew as already dead. Yet these differences are not hard to adjust; he left her at the last gasp; he knew not whether to regard her as alive or dead; he knew that life was ebbing so fast when he quitted her side, that she could scarcely be living now; † and yet, having no certain notices of her death, he was perplexed whether to speak of her as departed or not, and thus at one moment expressed himself in one language, at the next in another. It is singular enough that a circumstance of this kind, so taken from the life, so testifying of the reality of the things recorded, should have been advanced by some as a contradiction between one Gospel and another.

That Lord, upon whose ear the tidings of woe might never fall, in vain, at once "*arose and followed him, and so did his disciples.*" The crowd who had been listening to his teaching, followed also, that they might see the end. The miracle of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood found place upon the way, but it will naturally be better treated apart, especially as it is entirely separable from this history, though not altogether without its bearing upon it; for the delay, the words to the disciples, the conversation with the woman, must all have been a sore trial to the agonized father, now when every moment was precious, when death was shaking the last few sands in the hour-glass of his daughter's life,—a trial in its kind similar to that with which the sisters of Lazarus were tried, when they beheld their beloved brother drawing ever nigher to death, and the Lord tarried notwithstanding. But however great the trial, we detect no signs of impatience on his part, and this no doubt was laid to his account. While the Lord was yet speaking to the woman, there came from the ruler's house certain of his friends or servants. St. Luke mentions but one, probably that one who was especially charged with the message, whom others went along with, even as it is common for men in their thirst for excitement to have a

\* Ἐσχάτως ἔχεται = in extremis esse; one of the frequent Latinisms of St. Mark. So ἰκανὸν ποιῆσαι = satisfacere, (xv. 15,) σπεκουλάτωρ, (vi. 27,) φουγαλλῶν, (xv. 15,) λυγέων, (v. 9. 15.) and many more.

† Bengel: Ita dixit ex conjecturâ. Augustine (*De Cons. Evang.*, l. 2, c. 28): Ita enim desperaverat, ut potius eam vellet reviviscere, non credens vivam posse inveniri, quam morientem reliquerat. But Theophylact, not, I think, rightly: Ἦν αἰζιτων τὴν συμφορὰν, ὡς εἰς ἔλεον ἰλκῆσαι τὸν Χριστόν.

kind of pleasure in being the bearers even of evil tidings. They come "saying to him, *Thy daughter is dead, trouble not\* the Master.*" They who, perhaps, had faith enough to believe that Christ could fan the last expiring spark of life into a flame, yet had not the stronger faith which would have enabled them to believe the harder thing, that he could once more enkindle that spark of life, when it was quenched altogether. Their hope had perished: perhaps the father's would have perished too, and thus there would have been no room for this miracle, since faith, the necessary condition, would have been wanting; but a gracious Lord prevented his rising doubts, for "as soon as he heard the word that was spoken, he saith to the ruler of the synagogue, *Be not afraid, only believe.*" Here the emphasis should be placed on the first words—as soon as the tidings came, on that very instant the Lord spake, thus leaving no room or place for a doubt to insinuate into the father's mind, before he had pre-occupied him with a word of confidence and encouragement.†

The Lord took with him but three of his apostles, the same three who were allowed, more than once on later occasions, to be witnesses of things hidden from the rest. This, however, is the first time that we read of any such election within the election,‡ and the fact of such now finding place would mark, especially when we remember the solemn significance of the other seasons of a like selection, (Matt. xvii. 2; xxvi. 37,) that this was a new era in the life of the Lord. That which he was about to do was so great and holy that those three only, the flower and the crown of the apostolic band, were its fitting witnesses. The parents were present on grounds altogether different. Those, and these, and none other, accompanied him into the house. There, as every where else, he appears as the calmer and pacifier: "*Why make ye this ado and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.*" Some, and those not unbelievers, nor persons who have learned to regard miracles as so much perilous ware, from which it is always an advantage when

\* Σκεπῶλω, properly to flay, as σκεῦλα are originally the spoils, dress, or armor, stripped from the bodies of the slain; see Passow. Afterwards more generally, fatigare, vexare, and often it would seem with a more particular allusion to fatiguing with the length of a journey; and so perhaps here, "Why do you weary the master with this tedious way?" It is well known that some MSS. and Fathers read ἐσκυλμένοι for ἐκκελυμένοι at Matt. ix. 36, which, if the word have indeed this under meaning, would then be peculiarly appropriate. (See SUICER'S *Thes.*, s. v.)

† Titus Bostrensis (in CRAMER'S *Cat.*, in *Luc.*): "Ἴνα γὰρ μὴ εἶπῃ καὶ αὐτὸς, Ἐπίσχεε, οὐ χρεῖαν σου ἔχω, Κῆριε, ἥδη γέγονε τὸ πῆρις, ἀπέθανεν, ἦν προσεδοκῶμεν ὑγιαίνειν ἄπιστος γὰρ ἔν, Ἰουδαϊκὸν ἔχων φρόνημα, φθάσει ὁ Κῆριος καὶ φησι, Μὴ φοβοῦ, παῖσον τῆς ἀπιστίας τὰ βήματα.

‡ The three, Peter, James, and John, are called therefore by Clement of Alexandria, ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτοτέρους.

the Gospels can be a little lightened,—Olshausen, for instance,\* who is as far as possible from wishing to explain away the wonderful works of our Lord,—have yet considered his words, repeated by all the narrators, “*The maid is not dead, but sleepeth,*” to be so explicit and distinct a declaration that death had not absolutely taken place, that in obedience, as they believe, to these words of our Lord’s, they refuse to number this among the actual raisings from the dead. They will count it only a raising from a death-like swoon; though one it may have been from which the maiden would never have returned but for that life-giving touch and voice. Had this, however, been the case, Christ’s word to the father would clearly have been different, when the tidings came that the spirit of the child was actually fled. The consolation must have clothed itself in another language. He might have brought out the side of his omniscience, and bid him not to fear, for *he* knew that no such evil had befallen him as he imagined. But that “*Be not afraid, only believe,*” points another way; it is an evident summoning him to a trust in the all-might of the gracious helper, who is coming with him to his house.

And as regards the Lord’s words, that the maiden was not dead, but slept, he uses exactly the same language concerning Lazarus, “*Our friend Lazarus sleepeth,*” (John xi. 11;) and when Olshausen replies to this obvious objection, that Christ explains there distinctly that he meant the sleep of death, adding presently, “*Lazarus is dead,*” it is enough to answer that he does not do so till his disciples have misunderstood his words: he would have left those words, but for their mistaking them and supposing he had spoken of natural sleep—“*Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.*” But as Lazarus only slept, because Jesus was going that he “*might awake him out of sleep,*” so was she only sleeping, because her awakening was so near.† Beside this, to speak of death as a sleep, is an image common, I suppose, to all languages and nations. Thereby the reality of the death is not denied, but only the fact implicitly assumed, that death will be followed by a resurrection, as sleep is by an awakening. Nor is it hard to perceive why the Lord should have spoken in this language here. First, in regard to the father, the words are an establishing of a tottering faith, which the sight of all

\* Origen (*Con. Cels.*, ii. 48,) has, I think, the same view of this miracle. He is observing on the absence of all *prodigality* in the miracles, and notes that we have but three raisings from the dead in all: mentioning this first of Jairus’s daughter, he adds, *περὶ ἧς οὐκ αἰεὶ ὅπως εἶπει, Οὐκ ἀπέθανε, ἀλλὰ καθύπερ ἄγονε τε περὶ αὐτῆς ὅτι πᾶσι τοῖς ἀποθανόντων τρωσῆμι*, but he does not express himself very plainly.

† Fritzsche: *Puellam ne pro mortuâ habetote, sed dormire existimatote, quippe in vitam mox redituram.*

these signs of mourning, these evidences that all was finished, might easily have overturned altogether. They are a saying over again, "*Be not afraid, only believe.*" He, the Lord of life, takes away that word of fear, "She is dead," and puts in its room that milder word which gives promise of an awakening, "She sleepeth." And then in regard of the multitude, according to that holy humility which makes him ever withdraw his miracles as much as possible from observation, he will by this word of a double signification cast a veil over that which he is about to accomplish.

And now, having thus spoken, he expelled from the house the crowd of turbulent mourners, and this for two reasons; and first, their presence was evidently inappropriate and superfluous there; they were mourners for the dead, and she was not dead; or, at least, her death was so soon to give place to returning life, that it did not deserve the name; it was but as a sleep and an awakening, though they, indeed, who heard this assertion of the Lord, so little understood it, that they met it with laughter and with scorn, "*knowing that she was dead,*" that they were mourners for the dead. This would have been reason enough for silencing and putting out those mourners. But in addition to this, the boisterous and turbulent grief of some, the hired lamentations, it may be, of others,\* gave no promise of the true tone and temper, which became the witnesses of so holy and awful a mystery, a mystery from which even apostles themselves were excluded—not to speak of the profane and scornful spirit with which they had received the Lord's assurance, that the child should presently awake. The scorers were not to witness the holy act;—the pearls were for others than for them.†

The house was now solitary and still. Two souls, believing and hoping, stand like funeral tapers beside the couch of the dead maiden—the father and the mother. His Church the Lord sees represented in his three most trusted apostles. And now the solemn awakening finds place. He took the child, for such she was, being but twelve years of age, (Mark v. 42,) "*by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.*" Saint Mark gives us the very words which the Lord spake in the very language wherein he uttered them, "*Talitha Cumi,*" no doubt as having something especially solemn in them, as he does the "*Ephphatha*" on another occasion. (vii. 34.) And at that word, and at the touch of that hand, "*her spirit came again,‡ and she arose straightway* (Luke viii. 55)

\* The presence of the hired mourners at a funeral, in general women, (*θηνηροδοί, præficæ, cornicines, tubicines,*) was a Greek and Roman, as well as a Jewish custom. (See BECKER'S *Chariktes*, v. 2, p. 180)

† We may compare 2 Kin. iv. 33, where every one is in like manner excluded.

‡ The words of St. Luke, *καὶ ἐπέστρεψε τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῆς*, are exactly the same as those 1 Kin. xvii. 22, LXX.

*and walked.*" (Mark v. 42.) And then at once to strengthen that life which was come back to her, and to prove that she was indeed no ghost, but had returned to the realities of a mortal existence, (Luke xxiv. 41; John xxi. 5; Acts x. 41.) "*he commanded to give her meat;*" which precaution was the more necessary, as the parents in that ecstatic moment might easily have forgotten it.

These miracles of raising the dead, whereof we have been now considering the first, have always been regarded as the mightiest outcomings of the power of Christ; and with justice. They are those, also, at which unbelief is readiest to stumble, standing as they do in a yet more striking contrast than any of the other, to all that experience has known. The line between health and sickness is not definitely fixed; the two conditions melt one into the other, and the transition from this to that is frequent. In like manner storms alternate with calms; the fiercest tempest allays itself at last, and Christ's word did but anticipate and effect in a moment, what the very course of nature must have effected in the end. Even the transmutation from water to wine, and the multiplication of the bread, are not without their analogies, however remote; and thus too is it with most of the other miracles. But between being and the negation of being the opposition is not relative but absolute; between death and life a gulf lies, which nothing that nature lends, helps us even in imagination to bridge over. These considerations sufficiently explain how it should come to pass that these raisings from the dead are signs more spoken against than any other among the mighty works which the Lord accomplished.

The present will be an apt moment for saying something concerning them and the relations of difficulty in which they stand, if not to the other miracles, yet to one another. For they are not exactly the same miracle repeated three times over, but may be contemplated as an ever ascending scale of difficulty, each a greater outcoming of the power of Christ than the preceding. For as the body of one freshly dead, from which life is but just departed, is very different from a mummy or a skeleton, so is it, though not in so great a degree, different from a corpse, whence for some days the breath of life has fled. There is, so to speak, a fresh trodden way between the body, and the soul which just has forsaken and, according to that Jewish legend which may rest on a very deep truth, lingers for a while and hovers near the tabernacle where it has dwelt so long, and to which it knows itself bound by links, which even now have not been divided for ever. Even science itself has arrived at the conjecture, that the last echoes of life ring in the body much longer than is commonly supposed; that for a while it is full of

the reminiscences of life. Out of this we may explain how it so frequently comes to pass, that all which marked the death-struggle passes presently away, and the true image of the departed, the image it may be of years long before, reappears in perfect calmness and in almost ideal beauty. Which things being so, we shall at once recognize in the quickening of him that had been four days dead, a yet mightier wonder than in the raising of the young man who was borne out to his burial: since that burial, according to Jewish custom, would have followed death by an interval, at most, of a single day; and again in *that* miracle a mightier outcoming of Christ's power than in the present, wherein life's flame, like some newly-extinguished taper, was still more easily re-kindled again, being brought in contact with him in whom was the fountain-flame of all life. Mightier also than any of these wonders, will be the wonder of that hour, when all the dead of old, that have lain, some of them for so many thousand years, in the dust of death, shall be summoned from and shall leave their graves at the same quickening voice.

## VII.

### THE WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD.

MATT. ix. 20—22 ; MARK v. 25—34 ; LUKE viii. 43—48.

IN all three accounts which we have of this miracle, it is intertwined with that other of the raising of Jairus's daughter. As the Prince of life was on his road to the accomplishing that other, he accomplished this, as by the way. It is to St. Mark and Luke that we owe the more detailed accounts, which bring out its distinctive features. St. Matthew relates it more briefly: so that, if we had not the parallel narrations, we should be in danger of missing much of the instruction which is here contained for us.

As the crowd followed Jesus, curious to witness what the issue would be, and whether he would indeed raise the dead or dying daughter of Jairus, which by his consenting to accompany him home he seemed to have undertaken to do,—as this crowd pressed upon him, there came one, who, not out of curiosity, nor at all as that unmannered multitude, touched him from behind. This was a woman\* that had labored long,

\* A sermon, wrongly attributed to St. Ambrose, makes this woman to have been Martha, the sister of Lazarus. Another legend, that of the gospel of Nicodemus, (see TULLO'S *Cod. Apocryph.*, v. I, p. 562,) makes her to have been Veronica. There is a strange story, full of inexplicable difficulties, told by Eusebius, (*Hist. Eccl.*, l. 7, c. 18,) of a statue, or rather two statues, in brass, one of Christ, another of this woman kneeling to him, which existed in his time at Cæsarea Paneas, having been raised by her in thankful commemoration of her healing. See the 10th excursus in the Annotations (Oxford, 1842,) to Dr. Burton's *Eusebius*. The belief that these statues did refer to this event was so widely spread as to cause Julian, in his hatred against all memorials of Christianity, or according to others, Maximinus, to destroy it. There can be no doubt that a group, capable of being made to signify this event, was there, for Eusebius speaks as having himself seen it, but the correctness of the application is far more questionable. Justin Martyr's mistaking of a statue erected at Rome to a Sabine deity, (Semoni Saneio,) for one erected in honor of Simon Magnus, shows how



for no less than twelve years, under a disease from which she found no healing from the physicians, but rather she had suffered many aggravations of her disease, from the painfulness of their attempted remedies,\* the costliness of which, with the expenses that had attended her long sickness, had brought her to poverty. “*All that she had*” had been ineffectually wasted in seeking for restoration, and withal she “*was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.*”† The faith that brought her to touch the hem of the Lord’s garment was a most real faith, (see ver. 22, “*Thy faith hath saved thee,*”) yet was it not altogether unmingled with error in regard to the manner in which the healing power of Christ presented itself to her mind as working. It would appear as though she did not conceive of the Lord as healing by the power of his holy will, but rather imagined a certain magical influence and virtue diffused through his person and round about him, with which if she could put herself in relation, she would obtain that which she desired: “*If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.*”‡ And it is probable that she touched the *hem* of his garment, not merely as the extremest part, and therefore that which she, timidly drawing near, could most easily reach, but attributing to it a peculiar virtue. For this hem or blue fringe on the borders of the garment was put there by divine command, and was to remind the Jews that they were God’s people. (Num. xv. 37—40; Deut. xxii. 12.) It had thus acquired so peculiar a significance, that those who wished to be esteemed eminently religious were wont to make broad or to “enlarge the borders of their garments.” (Matt. xxiii. 5.) But her faith, though thus imperfect in its form, and though it did not bear her like a triumphant flood-tide, over the peculiar difficulties which beset *her*, a woman coming to make known what manner of need was hers, was yet most true in its essence. That faith, therefore, was not disappointed, but was the channel to her of the blessing which she sought; no sooner had she touched the hem of his robe than “*she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.*”§

little critical the early Christians sometimes were in matters of this kind. (See DEYLING’S *Obs. Sac.*, v. 1, p. 279.)

\* See LIGHTFOOT’S *Hor. Heb.*, (in *Marc.* v. 26,) for an extraordinary list of those in use for this disorder.

† In the apocryphal report of Pilate to Tiberius, he, alluding to this miracle, forcibly paints the extreme emaciation of this woman from her complaint, *ὡς πᾶσαν, τὴν τῶν ὀστέων ἄρμονίαν φαίεσθαι, καὶ ἔλεον δίκην διαυγάζειν.* (THELO’S *Cod. Apocryphus* v. 1, p. 808.)

‡ There was something in her, as Grotius well remarks, of the notion of the philosophers, *Deum agere omnia φύσει οὐ βουλήσει.*

§ Ἐπὶ τῆς μίστιγος, scil. Θεοῦ, since disease must ever be regarded as the scourge

But although the Evangelists fall in so far with the current of her thoughts as to use language that would be appropriate to it, and to say, "*Jesus immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him,*" yet we cannot for an instant suppose that this healing power went forth without the full consent of his will,\*—that we have here, on his part, an *unconscious* healing, any more than on another occasion, when we read that "the whole multitude sought to touch him, for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all." (Luke vi. 19.) For we should lose the ethical, which is ever the most important, element of the miracle, if we could suppose that power went forth from him to heal, without reference, on his part, to the spiritual condition of the person upon whom it went forth. He who with the eye of his spirit saw Nathanael under the fig-tree, who needed not that any should testify, for he knew what was in man, must have known of this woman both her bodily and spiritual state,—how sorely as to the one she needed his help, and how as regarded the other she possessed that faith which was the one necessary condition of healing, the one channel of communication between him and any human need.

The only argument which could at all be adduced to favor the notion of an unconscious going forth of his power, would be that drawn from the question which he asked, when he "*turned about him in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?*" This might be construed as implying that he was ignorant of the person who had done it, and only uncertainly apprehended that something had taken place. If he knew, it might be argued, to what purpose the question? But, as the sequel of the history will abundantly prove, there was a purpose; since if she had been allowed to carry away her blessing in secret as she proposed, it would not have been at all the blessing to her, and to her whole after spiritual life, that it now was, when she was obliged by this repeated question of the Lord, to own that she had come to seek, and had found, health from him. And the other objection is easily dissolved, namely, that it would not have been perfectly consistent with truth to have asked as not knowing, when indeed he knew all the while, who had done that, concerning which he inquired. But a father when he comes among his children, and says, Who committed this fault? himself conscious, even while he asks, but at the same time willing to bring the culprit to a free confession, and so to put him in a pardonable state, can

of God, not always of the individual's sin, but ever of the sin which the individual has in common with the race. Cf. 2 Macc. ix. 11, *θεία μάλιστα*, and Sirac. xl. 9. So Æschylus, (*Sept. adv. Theb.*), *πληγείς Θεοῦ μάλιστα*.

† Chrysostom: Παρ' ἰκόντος ἔλαβε τὴν σωτηρίαν, καὶ οὐ παρ' ἄκοντος, ἧδοι γὰρ τὴν ἀψαμένην.

he be said in any way to violate the laws of the highest truth? The same offence might be found in Elisha's "Whence comest thou, Gehazi?" (2 Kin. v. 25,) when his heart went with him all the way that he had gone; and even in the question of God himself to Adam, "Where art thou?" In each of those cases, as here, there is a moral purpose in the question,—an opportunity given even at the latest moment for undoing at least a part of the fault by its unreserved confession, an opportunity which they whose examples have been here adduced, suffered to escape; but which she, who it needs not to say had a fault of infinitely a slighter nature to acknowledge, had ultimately grace given her to use.

But this question itself, "*Who touched me?*" when indeed the whole multitude was rudely pressing upon and crowding round him, has often suggested many profitable reflections. Thus it has been often observed how *she* only *touchèd* with the touch of faith: the others, though as near or nearer in body, yet lacked that faith which is the connecting link between Christ's power and our need; and thus they crowded upon Christ, but did not touch him in any way that he should take note of. And thus it is ever in the Church; many *press* upon Christ: his in name; near to him and to his Sacraments outwardly; yet not *touching* him, because not drawing near in faith, not looking for and therefore not obtaining life and healing from him, and through these.\*

When the disciples, and Peter at their head, wonder at the question, and in their reply dare almost to find fault with a question which to them seems so out of place, "*Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?*" the Lord replies, re-affirming the fact, "*Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.*" Whereupon the woman, finding that concealment was useless,

\* Augustine (*Serm.* 62, c. 4): Quasi enim sic ambularet, ut à nullo prorsus corpore tangeretur, ita dicit, Quis me tetigit? Et illi, Turbæ te comprimunt. Et tanquam diceret Dominus, Tangentem quæro, non prementem. Sic etiam nunc est corpus ejus, id est, Ecclesia ejus. Tangit eam fides paucorum, premit turba multorum. . . . Caro enim premit, fides tangit. And again he says (*Serm.* 77, c. 4): Corpus ergo Christo multi molestè premunt, pauci salubriter tangunt. And elsewhere he makes her the symbol of the Church (*Serm.* 245, c. 3): Illi premunt, ista tetigit. . . . Judæi affligunt, Ecclesia credidit. Chrysostom has with reference to this saying the same antithesis: 'Ο πιστεύων εἰς τὸν Σωτήρα ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ· ὁ δὲ ἀπιστῶν θλίβει αὐτὸν καὶ λυπεῖ. Cf. Gregory the Great, *Moral*, l. 3, c. 20, and l. 20, c. 17. Chemnitz (*Harm. Evang.*, c. 67): Ita quoque in Ecclesiâ multi Christo approximant, externis auribus verbum salutis accipiunt, ore suo Sacramentum corporis et sanguinis ipsius manducant et bibunt, nullam tamen efficaciam ex eo percipiunt, nec sentiunt fluxum illum peccatorum suorum sisti et exsiccare. Unde illud! Quia destituuntur verâ fide, quæ sola ex hoc fonte haurit gratiam pro gratiâ.

that the denial, which probably she had made with the rest, for it is said, "*all denied*," (Luke viii. 45,) would profit her nothing; unable, too, to escape his searching glance, for "*he looked round about to see her*," (Mark v. 32,) "*came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him*," and this "*before all the people, for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately*." Olshausen brings out here, with much beauty, how in all this the loving and gracious dealings of the Son of man, who always sought to make through the healing of the body a way for the healing of the soul, are to be traced. She had borne away a maimed blessing, hardly a blessing at all, had she been suffered to bear it away in secret and unacknowledged. She desired to remain in concealment out of a shame, which, however natural, was untimely here in this crisis of her spiritual life: and this her loving Saviour would not suffer her to do: by a gracious force he drew her from it; yet even here he spared her as far as he could. For not before, but after she is healed, does he require the open confession from her lips. She had found it perhaps altogether too hard, had he demanded it of her before; therefore does he graciously wait till the cure is accomplished, and thus helps her through the narrow way. Altogether spare her this painful passage he could not, for it pertained to her birth into the new life.\*

And now he dismisses her with words of gracious encouragement, "*Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole*."† Her faith had made her whole, and Christ's virtue had made her whole.‡ It is as when we say that faith justifies: our faith is not itself a blessing; but it is the organ by which the blessing is received; it is the right

\* Sedulius then has exactly missed the point of the narrative, when of the Lord he says,

. . . . . *furtumque fidele*  
Laudat, et ingenue tribuit sua vota rapinæ;

for it was precisely this which was deficient in her, that she sought it as a *furtum*, when she should have claimed it openly: and no less Bernard (*De Divers.*, *Serm.* 99.) when he makes her the figure of all those who would do good hiddenly, avoiding all human applause: *Sunt alii qui nonnulla bona occultè faciunt, . . . sed tamen furari [regnum cælorum] dicuntur, quia laudem humanam vitantes, solo divino testimonio contenti sunt. Horum figuram tenuit mulier in Evangelio, &c.* Rather she is the figure of those who would *get* good hiddenly, and without an open profession of their faith, who believe in their hearts, but shrink from confessing with their lips, that Jesus Christ is Lord, forgetting that not this alone, but that also is required. (Rom. x. 9.)

† TERTULLIAN, *Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 20.

‡ Her faith, *δογματικῶς*, Christ's virtue, *ἰερωφητικῶς*. This, as the *causa efficiens*; that, as the *conditio sine quâ non*.

hand of the soul, which lays hold upon it. “*Go in peace ;*” this is not merely, Go with a blessing, but, Go into the element of peace as the future element in which thy life shall move ;—“*and be whole of thy plague.*”

Theophylact brings out a mystical meaning in this miracle. This woman’s complaint represents the ever-flowing fountain of sin ; the physicians, the philosophers and wise men of this world, that with all their medicines, their systems and their philosophies, prevailed nothing to stanch that fountain of evil in man’s heart. To touch Christ’s garment is to believe in his Incarnation, wherein he touched us, enabling us to touch him : whereupon that healing, which in all those other things was vainly sought, follows at once. And if we keep in mind how her uncleanness separated her off as one impure, we shall have here an exact picture of the sinner, drawing nigh to the throne of grace, but out of the sense of his impurity not with boldness, rather with fear and trembling, hardly knowing what there he shall expect ; but who is welcomed there, and, all his carnal doubtings and questionings expelled, dismissed with the word of an abiding peace resting upon him.

## VIII.

### THE OPENING THE EYES OF TWO BLIND IN THE HOUSE.

MATT. ix. 27—31.

WE have here the first of those healings of the blind whereof so many are recorded (Matt. xii. 22; xx. 30; xxi. 14; John ix.) or alluded to in the Gospel narrative.\* Nor is this little history without one or two features distinguishing it from others of a like kind. These two blind men appear to have followed Jesus in the way; it may have been, and Jerome supposes it was, as he was returning from the house of Jairus. Yet one would not lay too much stress on the connection in which St. Matthew sets the miracle, or necessarily conclude that he intended to place it in such immediate relation of time and place with the raising of the ruler's daughter. There was the same trial of the faith of these blind men, although in a more mitigated form, as found place in the case of the Syrophenician woman. Not all at once did they receive the boon which they sought; but the Lord seemed at first rather to withdraw himself from them, suffering them to cry after him, and for a while pay-

\* Their frequent recurrence need not surprise us; for blindness throughout all the East is a far commoner calamity than with us. For this there are many causes. The dust and flying sand, pulverized and reduced to minutest particles, enters the eyes, causing inflammations, which being neglected, end frequently in total loss of sight. The sleeping in the open air, on the roofs of the houses, and the consequent exposure of the eyes to the noxious nightly dews, is another source of this malady. A modern traveller calculates that there are four thousand blind in Cairo alone, and another that you may reckon twenty such in every hundred persons. It is true that in Syria the proportion of those afflicted with blindness is not at all so great, yet there also the calamity is of far more frequent occurrence than in western lands, so that we find humane regulations concerning the blind as concerning a class in the old Law. (Lev. xix. 14; Deut. xxvii. 18.)

ing no regard to their cries. It was only after they followed him into the house, and had thus shown that they were in earnest in seeking and expecting a boon from him, that he yielded to them the blessing which they sought.\* But ere he does this, as he has tried them in deed by the delay of the blessing, he proves them also in word. He will have the confession of their faith from their own lips: "*Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.*" And then, when he found that they had this necessary condition for the receiving any one of his blessings, when he perceived that they had faith to be healed, "*he touched their eyes.*" And this time it is by that simple touch that he opens those closed eyes; (Matt. xx. 34;) at other times he uses as the conductors of his power, and as helps to the faith of those who should be healed, some further instruments,—the clay mingled with spittle (John ix. 6, 7,) or the moisture of his mouth alone. We do not, I think, anywhere read of his opening the blind eyes simply by his word, although of course that would have been equally easy to him. The words which accompany the act of healing are remarkable—"According to your faith be it unto you,"—remarkable for the insight which they give us into the relation of man's faith and God's gift. The faith, which in itself is nothing, is yet the organ of receiving every thing. It places the man in relation with the divine blessing; of no esteem in itself, but only in its relation to its object. It is the bucket let down into the fountain of God's grace, without which the man could not draw up out of that fountain; the purse, which though itself of the coarsest material, does yet enrich its owner by that which it contains.†

It is very characteristic, and rests on very deep differences, that of the Romish interpreters almost all, indeed I know not an exception, should excuse, or rather applaud, these men for not adhering strictly to Christ's command, his earnest, almost threatening,‡ injunction to them, that they should let none know what he had done,—that the expositors of that Church of will-worship should see in their disobedience the over-

\* Calvin: Re igitur et verbis examinare voluit eorum fidem: suspensos enim tenens, imo præteriens quasi non exaudiat, patientiæ ipsorum experimentum capit, et qualem in ipsorum animis radicem egerit fides.

† Faith, the ὄργανον ληπτικόν, nothing in itself, yet every thing, because it places us in living connection with him in whom every good gift is stored. Thus on this passage Chemnitz (*Harm. Evang.*, c. 68): Fides est instar haustri gratiæ cœlestis et salutis nostræ, quo ex inscrutabili et inexhausto divinæ misericordiæ et bonitatis fonte, ad quem aliter penetrare non possumus, haurimus et ad nos attrahimus quod nobis salutare est. Calvin (*Inst.*, iii. 11, 7): Fides etiamsi nullius per se dignitatis sit, vel pretii, nos justificat, Christum afferendo, sicut olla pecuniis referta hominem locupletat.

‡ Ἐνεβριμῆσατο αὐτοῖς. Suidas explains ἐμβριμᾶσθαι = μετὰ ἀπειλῆς ἐντέλλεσθαι μετ' αὐστηρότητος ἐπιτιμᾶν.

flowings which could not be restrained of grateful hearts, and not therefore a fault but a merit. Some indeed of the ancients, as Theophylact, go so far as to suppose that the men did not disobey at all in proclaiming the miracle, that Christ never intended them to preserve his precept about silence; but gave it out of humility, being best pleased when it was not observed.\* But the Reformed, whose first principle it is to take God's Word as absolute rule and law, and to worship God not with self-devised services, but after the pattern that he has given them, stand fast to this, that obedience is better than sacrifice, even though that sacrifice may appear in honor of God himself; and see in this publishing of the miracle, after the prohibition given, a blemish in the perfectness of their faith who did it, a fault, though a fault into which they only, who were full of gratitude and thankfulness, could have fallen.

\* Thus Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.*, 2<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>ae</sup>, qu. 104, art. 4): Dominus cæcis dixit ut miraculum occultarent, non quasi intendens eos per virtutem divini præcepti obligare; sed sicut Gregorius dicit 19 Moral., servis suis se sequentibus exemplum dedit, ut ipsi quidem virtutes suas occultare desiderent, et tamen, ut alii eorum exemplo proficiant, prodantur inviti. Cf. MALDONATUS *in loc.*



## IX.

### THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC

MATT. ix. 1—9; MARK ii. 1—12; LUKE v. 17—26.\*

It was at Capernaum, while the Lord was teaching there, and on an occasion when there were present Pharisees and doctors of the law from many quarters, some of whom had come even as far as from Jerusalem, (Luke v. 17,) that this healing of the paralytic took place.† It might have been a kind of conference, more or less friendly upon the part of these, which had brought together as listeners and spectators the great multitude of whom we read, a multitude so great that the avenues of approach to the house were blocked up; “*there was no room to receive them, no not so much as about the door,*”‡ and thus no opportunity, by any ordinary way, of access to the Lord. (Matt. xii. 46, 47.) And now some who arrived late with their sick, who brought with them a poor paralytic, “*could not come nigh unto him for the press.*” Only the two later Evangelists record for us the extraordinary method to which the

\* Chrysostom mentions, in a sermon upon this miracle, (v. 3, p. 37, 38, Bened. edit.) that many in his day confounded this history with that of the impotent man at Bethesda,—a supposition so wholly groundless as hardly to be worth the complete refutation which he gives it, showing that on no one point do the histories agree. In the apocryphal *Evangelium Nicodemi*, (see THULO's *Cod. Apocryph.*, v. 1, p. 556,) there is a confusion of the two miracles.

† The words of St. Luke, “The power of the Lord was present to heal *them*,” are difficult, *αὐτοῖς* having no antecedent to which it refers; for clearly it cannot refer to the Pharisees and doctors just before named. There was nothing in them which made them receptive either of a bodily or a spiritual healing. Most likely it is proleptic; the Evangelist, in writing thus, has already in his mind him, though yet unnamed, on whom that power was put forth. We must take *ἤν* as pregnant, supplying *ἰργαζομένην*, or some such word.

‡ *Τὰ πρὸς τὴν θύραν*, scil. *μέρη* = *πρόθυρον*, vestibulum, atrium.

bearers of the suffering man (St. Mark tells us they were four,) were compelled to have recourse, for bringing him before the notice of the great healer of bodies and of souls. They first ascended to the roof: this was not so difficult, because commonly there was a flight of steps on the outside of the house, reaching to the roof, as well as, or sometimes instead of, an internal communication of the same kind. Such are to be seen (I have myself seen them,) in those parts of the south of Spain which bear a permanent impress of Eastern habits. Our Lord assumes the existence of such, when he says, "Let him that is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house," (Matt. xxiv. 17;) he is to take the nearest and shortest way of escaping into the country: but he could only avoid the necessity of descending through the house by the existence of such steps as these.\* Some will have it, that, on the present occasion, the bearers having thus reached the roof, did no more than let down their sick through the grating or trap-door, which already existed therein, (cf. 2 Kin. i. 2;) or, at most, that they might have widened such an aperture, already existing, to enable them to let down the sick man's bed. Others,† that Jesus was sitting in the open court, round which the houses in the East are commonly built, and that to this they got access by the roof, and breaking through the breastwork or battlement (Deut. xxii. 8,) made of tiles, which guarded the roof, and removing the linen awning which was stretched over the court, let him down in the midst before the Lord. But there seems no sufficient reason for departing from the obvious meaning of the words. In St. Mark, at least, they are so plain and clear, that we can suppose nothing else than that a part of the actual covering of the roof was removed, that so the bed on which the palsied man lay might be let down before the Lord.‡ The whole circumstance will be much more easily conceived, and present fewer difficulties, when we keep in mind that it was probably the upper chamber, (ὑπερώου,) where were assembled those that were

\* The same must have existed in a Roman house, from a notice we have in Livy, l. 39, c. 14. A witness, whom it is most important to preserve from being tampered with, is shut up in the chamber adjoining the roof, (cœnaculum super ædes,)—and, to make all sure, seals ferentibus in publicum obseratis, aditu in ædes verso. (See BECKER'S *Gallus*, v. 1, p. 94.)

† Shaw, for instance, quoted in Rosenmuller (*Alte und Neue Morgenland*, v. 5, p. 129.) He makes τὸ μέσον to signify the central court, impluvium, cava ædium. But against this use of εἰς τὸ μέσον, or rather for the common one, see Luke iv. 35; Mark iii. 3; xiv. 60. And so, too, Titus Bostrensis (in CRAMER'S *Catena*): Εἶποι δ' ἄν τις ὑπαιθρον εἶναι τόπον, εἰς ὃν διὰ τῶν κεράμων κατεβίβασαν τὴν κλίνην τοῦ παραλύτου, μηδὲν παντελῶς τῆς στέγης ἀνατρεψάντες.

‡ Winer, (*Real Wörterbuch*, s. v. *Dach*,) who weighs the other explanations, has come to exactly the same conclusion. Cf. DE WETTE'S *Archæologie*, p. 118, seq.

drawn together to hear the Lord. This, as the most retired, (2 Kin. iv. 10, LXX. ; Acts ix. 37,) and probably the largest room in the house, extending oftentimes over its whole area, was much used for such purposes as that which now drew him and his hearers together.\* (Acts i. 13 ; xx. 8.)

The merciful Son of man, condescending to every need of man, and never taking ill that which witnessed for an earnest faith in him, even though, as here, it manifested itself in a way so novel,—in one, too, which must have altogether disturbed the quiet of his teaching, saw with an eye well-pleased their faith. Had we only the account of St. Matthew, we should hardly understand wherein their special faith consisted,—why here, more than in many similar instances, it should have been noted ; but the other Evangelists admirably complete that which he would have left obscure. They tell us how it was a faith which pressed through hinderances, and was not to be turned aside by difficulties.† By “*their faith*,” many, as Jerome and Ambrose, understand the faith of the bearers only, but there is no need so to confine the words. To them the praise justly was due,‡ but no doubt the sick man was approving all which they did, or it would not have been done : so that Chrysostom, with greater reason, concludes, that it was alike their faith and his which the Lord saw and rewarded. And this faith, as in the case of all whom he healed, was not as yet the reception of any certain doctrines, but a deep inward sense of need, and of Christ as the one, who only could meet that need.

Beholding this faith, the Lord addressed him, “*Son,§ be of good cheer ; thy sins be forgiven thee :*” —a striking example this of the way in which the Lord gives *before* men ask, and *better* than men ask ; for this man had not asked any thing, save, indeed, in the dumb asking of that earnest effort to come near to Jesus ; and all that he dared to ask even in that, or at least all that his friends and bearers hoped for him, was that his body might be healed. Yet there was no doubt in himself

\* As Vitringa too (*De Synag.*, p. 145, seq) proves by abundant examples.

† Bengel: Per omnia fides ad Christum penetrat. Gerhard (*Harm. Evang.*, c. 43): Pictura est quomodo in tentationibus et calamitatibus ad Christum nobis conentur intercludere hominum judicia, quales fuerunt amici Jobi, et qui Ps. iii. 3, dicunt: Non est salus ipsi in Deo ejus. Item: Legis judicium et propriæ conscientiæ accusationes. Et quomodo per illa omnia fides perrumpere debeat, ut in conspectum Christi Mediatoris se demittat.

‡ *Ταῖς πιστεύουσας*, as in the apocryphal *Evangelium Nicodemi* they are called.

§ In St. Luke, “*Man*, thy sins are forgiven thee.” But as he addresses another down-smitten soul, “*Daughter*, be of good comfort,” (Matt. ix. 22,) it is probable that the tenderer appellation here also found place.

a deep feeling of his sickness in its innermost root; as growing out of sin, perhaps as the penalty of some especial sin whereof he was conscious; and some expression of contrition, some exclamation of a penitent heart, may have been the immediate occasion of these gracious words of forgiveness, as, indeed, the address, "*Son, be of good cheer,*" would seem also to imply that he was one evidently burdened and cast down, and, as the Lord saw, with more than the weight of his bodily sicknesses and sufferings. We shall see in other cases how the forgiveness of sins *follows* the outward healing: for we may certainly presume that such a forgiveness did ensue in cases such as that of the thankful Samaritan, of the impotent man who was first healed, and at a later period bidden to sin no more. (John v. 14.) But here the remission of sin takes the precedence; the reason no doubt being, that in the sufferer's own conviction there was so close a connection between his sin and his plague, that the outer healing would have been scarcely intelligible to him, would have scarcely carried to his mind the sense of a benefit, unless his conscience had been also set free; perhaps he was incapable even of receiving it, till there had been spoken peace to his spirit. James v. 14, 15, supplies an interesting parallel, in the connection which exists there also between the raising of the sick and the forgiving of his sin. The others, alluded to above, who had a much slighter sense of the relations between sin and suffering, were not first forgiven and then healed; but their thankfulness for their bodily healing was used to make them receptive of that better blessing which Christ had in store for them.

The absolving words, "*Thy sins be forgiven\* thee,*" are not to be taken as optative merely, as a desire that it might be so, but as declaratory of a fact. They are the justification of the sinner; and, as declaratory of that which takes place in the purposes of God, so also effectual, shedding abroad the sense of forgiveness and reconciliation in the sinner's heart. For God's justification of a sinner is not merely a word spoken about a man, but a word spoken to him and in him; not an act of God's, *inmanent* in himself, but *transitive* upon the sinner. In it there is the love of God, and so the consciousness of that love, shed

\* Ἀφέωνται. (Cf. Luke vii. 48; 1 John ii. 12.) The old grammarians are not at one in the explanation of this form. Some make it=ἀφῶνται, 2 aor. conj., as in Homer ἀφίη for ἀφῆ. Thus Eustathius; but others more rightly explain it as the præter. indic. pass.,=ἀφείνται, though of these again some find in it an Attic, others, more correctly, a Doric form. Cf. HEROD., l. 2, c. 165, ἀέωνται. This perfect passive will then stand in connection with the perfect active ἀφέωκα for ἀφείκα. (WILNER'S *Grammatik*, p. 77.)

abroad in his heart\* on whose behalf the absolving decree has been uttered. The murmurers and cavillers understood rightly that Christ, so speaking, did not merely wish and desire that this man's sins might be forgiven him; and that he did not, as does now the Church, in the name of another and wielding a delegated power, but in his own name, forgive the man his sins. They had also a right insight into the meaning of the forgiveness of sins itself, that it is a divine prerogative; that, as no man can remit a debt save he to whom the debt is due, so no one can forgive sin save he against whom all sin is committed, that is, God; and out of this feeling, true in itself, but most false in their present application of it, they said "*This man blasphemeth.*"

It is well worth our while to note, as Olshausen here calls us to do, the deep insight into the relations of God and the creature, which is involved in the Scriptural use of the word blasphemy. Profane antiquity knew nothing like it; with it "to blaspheme" meant only to speak something evil of a person,† (a use which indeed is not foreign to

\* It will be seen above that I have used Rom. v. 5 in a different sense from that in which it is too often used. The history of the exposition of the verse is curious, and is not altogether foreign to the subject in hand. To Augustine's influence, no doubt, we mainly owe the loss for many centuries of its true interpretation, which Origen, Chrysostom, and Ambrose, men every one of them less penetrated with the spirit of St. Paul than he was, had yet rightly seized; but which, by his influence and frequent use of it in another sense, was so completely lost sight of, that it was not recovered anew till the time of the Reformation. He read in his Latin, *Charitas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum, qui datus est nobis.* Had he read, as Ambrose reads it, (*De Spir. Sanc.*, l. 1, c. 8, § 88,) and as it should have been, *effusa*, (*ἐκκέχυται* is the original word,) it is probable he would have been saved from his mistake; for the comparison which would have been thus suggested with such passages as Acts ii. 17; Isai. xxxii. 15; Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Joel ii. 28, in all which God's large and free communication of himself to men is set forth under the image of a stream from heaven to earth, would have led him to see that this love of God which is poured out in our hearts, and is here declared to be our ground of confidence in him, is *his love to us*, and not *ours to him*: that the verse is in fact to find its explanation from ver. 8, and affirms the same thing. The passage is of considerable dogmatic importance. The perverted interpretation became in after times one of the mainstays, indeed by far the chiefest one, of the Romish theory of an *infused* righteousness being the ground of our confidence toward God: which the true explanation excludes, yet at the same time affirms this great truth, that God's justification of the sinner is not, as the Romanists say we hold it, an act merely declaratory, leaving the sinner as to his real state where it found him, but a *transitive* act, being not alone negatively a forgiveness of sin, but positively an imparting of the spirit of adoption, with the *sense* of reconciliation, and all else into which God's love received and believed will unfold itself.

† Βλασφημεῖν as opposed to εὐφημεῖν.

the Scripture,) and then, to speak something of an evil omen. Only the monotheistic religion included in blasphemy not merely outward words of cursing and outrage against the Name of God, but all snatchings on the part of the creature at honors which of right belonged only to the Creator. (Matt. xxvi. 65; John x. 36.) If he who thus spake had not been the only-begotten Son of the Father, the sharer in all prerogatives of the Godhead, he would indeed have blasphemed, as they deemed, when he thus spake. Their sin was not that they accused him, a man, of blasphemy; but that their eyes were so blinded that they could not recognize any glory in him higher than man's; that the light shined in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.\*

It is not for nothing that it is said that Jesus perceived "*in his Spirit*" that such thoughts were stirring in their hearts. (Mark ii. 8.) These words, "*in his Spirit*" are not superfluous, but his knowing faculty, that whereby he saw through the thoughts and counsels of hearts, and knew what was in man, is here attributed to his divine Spirit.† And these counsels he revealed to them; and in this way first he gave them to understand that he was more than they esteemed,‡ since thoughts of hearts were open and manifest to him, while yet it is God only who searches hearts, (1 Sam. xvi. 7; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; 2 Chron. vi. 30; Jer. xvii. 10,) it is only the divine Word of whom it can be said, that "he is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. iv. 12.)

Nor is it merely generally that he lays bare their thoughts of him, as being hard and evil, but he indicates the exact line which those thoughts were taking; for the charge which they made against him in their hearts, was not merely that he took to himself divine attributes, but that, doing so, he at the same time kept on the safe side as regarded detection, taking those wherein, by the very nature of things, it was not possible to prove him a false claimant. They were murmuring, no doubt, within themselves, "These honors are easily snatched; any man may go about the world claiming this power, and saying to men, 'Your sins are forgiven you;' but where is the evidence that this word is allowed and

\* Augustine (*Enarr. 3\* in Ps. xxxvi. 25*): Quis potest dimittere peccata [iniquum] nisi solus Deus? Et quia ille erat Deus, talia cogitantes audiebat. Hoc verum de Deo cogitabant, sed Deum præsentem non videbant. Fecit ergo . . . quod viderent, et dedit quod crederent.

† Grotius: Non ut Prophetæ per afflatum, sed suo Spiritu.

‡ Gerhard (*Harm. Evang. c. 43*): Jesus igitur exponens Pharisæis quid taciti apud se in intimis cordium recessibus cogitabant, ostendit se plus esse quàm hominem; et eâdem potestate, divinâ scilicet, quâ secreta cordium videat, se etiam peccata remittere posse.

ratified in heaven ; that what is thus spoken on earth is sealed in heaven ? In the very nature of the power which this man claims, he is secure from detection ; for this releasing of a man from the condemnation of his sin is an act wrought in the inner spiritual world, attested by no outer and visible sign ; therefore it is easily claimed, since it cannot be disproved." And our Lord's answer, meeting this evil thought in their hearts, is in fact this : " You accuse me that I am claiming a safe power, since, in the very nature of the benefit bestowed, no sign follows, nothing to bear witness whether I have challenged it rightfully or not ; but now I will put myself to a more decisive proof. I will speak a word, I will claim a power, which if I claim falsely, I shall be convinced upon the instant to be an impostor and a deceiver. I will say to this sick man, '*Rise up and walk ;*' by the effects, as they follow or do not follow, you may judge whether I have a right to say to him, '*Thy sins be forgiven thee.*' " \*

In our Lord's argument it must be carefully noted that he does not ask, Which is easiest, to forgive sins or to raise a sick man ? for it could not be affirmed that that of forgiving was easier than this of healing ; but, " Which is easiest, to claim this power or to claim that ; *to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk ?* That is easiest, and I will now prove my right to say it, by saying with effect and with an outward consequence setting its seal to my truth, the harder word, Arise and walk. By doing that, which is capable of being put to the proof, I will vindicate my right and power to do that which, in its very nature, is incapable of being proved. By these visible tides of God's grace I will give you to know in what direction the great under currents of his love are setting, and that both are obedient to my word. From this which I will now do openly and before you all, you may conclude that it is no 'robbery' (Phil. ii. 6,) upon my part to claim also the power

\* Corn à Lapide : Qui dicit, Remitto tibi peccata, mendacii argui non potest, sive ea reverà remittit, sive non, quia nec peccatum nec peccati remissio oculis videri potest ; qui autem dicit paralytico, Surge et ambula, se et famam suam evidenti falsitatis periculo exponit ; re ipsâ enim si paralyticus non surgat, falsitatis imposturæ et mendacii ab omnibus arguetur et convincetur. . . Unde signanter Christus non ait, Quid est facilius, remittere peccata, an sanare paralyticum, sed dicere, Dimittuntur tibi peccata, an dicere, Surge et ambula ? Jerome (*Comm. in Matth.*, in loc.) : Utrùm sint paralytico peccata dimissa, solus noverat, qui dimittebat. Surge autem et ambula, tam ille qui consurgebat, quàm hi qui consurgentem videbant approbare poterant. Fit igitur carnale signum, ut probetur spirituale. Bernard (*De Divers.*, *Serm.* 25) : Blasphemare me blasphematis, et quasi ad excusandum visibilis curationis virtutem, me invisibilem dicitis usurpare. Sed ego vos potius blasphemus esse convinco, signo probans visibili invisibilem potestatem.

of forgiving men their sins.”\* Thus, to use a familiar illustration of our Lord’s argument, it would be easier for a man, equally ignorant of French and Chinese, to claim to know the last than the first; not that the language of itself is easier; but that, in the one case, multitudes could disprove his claim; and, in the other, hardly a scholar or two in the land.

In the words, “*power on earth*,” there lies a tacit opposition to “*power in heaven*.” “This power is not exercised, as you deem, only by God in heaven; but also by the Son of man upon earth.† He has brought it down with him here, so that it, which, as you rightly assert, is only exercised by him who dwelleth in the heavens, has yet, in the person of the Son of man, descended also upon earth.‡ Here also is one who can speak, and it is done.” The only thing which at all surprises, is our Lord’s claiming this power as the “*Son of man*.” It is remarkable, since, at first sight, it might appear that this of forgiving sins being a *divine* attribute, the present was not the natural time for specially naming himself by this name, it being as the Son of God, and not as the Son of man, that he remitted sins.§ The Alexandrian fathers, in their conflict with the Nestorians, made use of this passage in proof of the entire transference which there was, of all the properties of Christ’s divine nature to his human; so that whatever one had, was so

\* Maldonatus, with his usual straightforward meeting of a difficulty, observes here, *Poterit autem aliquis meritò dubitare, quomodo Christus quod probandum erat, concludat. Nam si remittere peccata erat re verâ difficilium, dum experientiâ curati paralytici docet se quod re ipsâ facilius est, posse facere: non benè probat posse et se peccata remittere, quod erat difficilium. Respondeo, Christum tantùm probare voluisse sibi esse credendum, quod benè probat ab eo, cujus probatio erat difficilior; quasi dicat, Si non fallo cùm dico paralytico, Surge et ambula, ubi difficilium est probare me verum dicere, cur creditis me fallere cùm dico, Remittantur tibi peccata tua? Denique ex re, quæ effectu probari potest, in re, quæ probari non potest, sibi fidem facit. Augustine (*Exp. ad Rom.* § 23): Declaravit ideo se illa facere in corporibus, ut crederetur animas peccatorum dimissione liberare; id est, ut de potestate visibili potestas invisibilis mereretur fidem.*

† We have in Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18, parallels to this passage in their opposition of “on earth” and “in heaven;” but, at the same time, inadequate parallels, since the Church binds and looses by no inherent, but by a committed, power.

‡ It has been beautifully said of the Church, *Facit in terris opera colorum*. This of course must be first and eminently true of him in whom the Church consists, and the words find their fulfilment here.

§ Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* l. 4, c. 10,) supposes that by the use of this term our Lord wishes to throw back his hearers upon that one Old Testament passage, (Dan. vii. 13,) in which it occurs, and in which the mystery of all judgment, and therefore of all absolution, being in a man, is indicated. Cf. John v. 27.



far common that it might also be predicated of the other.\* It is quite true that had not the two natures been indissolubly knit together in a single person, no such language could have been used; yet I should rather suppose that "Son of man" being the standing title whereby the Lord was well pleased to designate himself, bringing out by it that he was at once one with humanity, and the crown of humanity, he does not so use it that the title is in every instance to be pressed, but at times simply as equivalent to Messiah.

Having said this much to the gainsayers, he turns to the poor man with the words, "*Arise, take up thy bed,† and go unto thine house,*"‡ in his person setting his seal to all the prerogatives which he had claimed: so that this miracle is eminently what indeed all are, though it is not equally brought out in all, "a sign," an outward sign of an inward truth, a link between this visible and a higher and invisible world. "*And immediately he arose, took up the bed,§ and went forth before them all;*" they who before blocked up his path, now making way for him, and allowing free egress from the assembly.

Concerning the effects of this miracle on the Pharisees, the narration is silent, and this, probably, because there was nothing good to tell;—but of the people, far less hardened against the truth, far more receptive of divine impressions, we are told "*they were all amazed, and glorified God;*" altogether according to the intention of the Saviour, praising the author of all good for the revelation of his glory in his Son. (Matt. v. 16.) There was a true sense upon their part of the significance of this fact, in their thankful exultation that God "*had given such power unto men.*" Without supposing that they very accurately explained to themselves, or could have explained to others, their feeling, yet they felt rightly that what was given to one man, to the Man Christ Jesus, was

\* See Cyril of Alexandria, in CRAMER'S *Catena*, in loc.

† Κράββατος = *grabatus* (in Luke, κλινίδιον) a mean and vile pallet used by the poorest = σκίμπος, ἀσκάνης. It is a Macedonian word, and was entirely rejected by Greek Purists. (See BECKER'S *Charikles*, v. 2, p. 121.) In relation to this, Sozomen tells a curious story of a bishop in Cyprus, who, teaching the people from this scripture, and having to repeat the Lord's words, substituted σκίμπος for κράββατος, and was rebuked by another bishop present, who asked him if the word which Christ used was not good enough for him to use.

‡ Compare Isaiah's words, (xxx. iii. LXX,) when he is recounting the promises of Messiah's time: Ἰσχυσατε, χεῖρες ἀνιμῆναι, καὶ γόνατα παραλελυμένα.

§ Arnobius, (*Con. Gen.*, l. 1, c. 45,) speaking generally of Christ's healings, but, of course, with allusion to this, magnifies the contrast of his so lately being carried on, and now carrying, his bed: Suos referebant lectos alienis paulo antè cervicibus lati.

given for the sake of all, and ultimately *to* all—that it was indeed given “*unto men* ;” —that he possessed these powers as the true Head and Representative of the race, and therefore that these gifts to him were a rightful subject of gladness and thanksgiving for every member of that race.

## X.

### THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER.

MATT. viii. 1—4; MARK i. 40—45; LUKE v. 12—16.

IT is said in one place concerning the apostles' preaching, that the Lord confirmed their word with signs following. (Mark xvi. 20.) Here we have a very remarkable example of his doing the same in the case of his own. For, according to the arrangement of the events of the Lord's life which I follow, and according to the connection of the events as it appears in St. Matthew, it is after that most memorable discourse of his upon the Mount, that this and other of his most notable miracles find place. It is as though he would set his seal to all that he has taught;—would approve himself to be this prophet having right to hold the language which there he has held, to teach as one having authority.\* He had scarcely ended, ere the opportunity for this occurred. As he was descending from the mountain, "*there came a leper and worshipped him,*" one, in the language of St. Luke, "*full of leprosy,*" so that it was not a spot here and there, but the disease had spread over his whole body: he was leprous from head to foot. He had ventured, it may be, to linger about the outskirts of the listening crowd, and now was not deterred by the severity of the closing sentences of Christ's discourse, from coming to claim the blessings which at its opening were proclaimed for the suffering and the mourning. Here, however, before proceeding to treat more particularly of this cure, it may be good, once for all, since the cleansing of lepers comes so frequently forward in the Gospel history, to say a few words concerning that dreadful disorder, and the meaning of the uncleanness which was attached to it.

\* Jerome (in loc.): Rectè post prædicationem atque doctrinam signorum offertur occasio, ut per virtutum miracula præteritis apud audientes sermo firmetur.

And first, a few words may be needful in regard of a misapprehension, which we find in such writers as Michaelis, and in all indeed who can see in the Levitical ordinances little more for the most part than regulations of police or of a board of health, or at the best, rules for the well ordering of an earthly society; who will not recognize in these ordinances the training of man into a sense of the cleaving taint which is his from his birth, into a sense of impurity and separation from God, and thus into a longing after purity and re-union with him. I allude to the common misapprehension that leprosy was catching from one person to another; and that they who were suffering under it were so carefully secluded from their fellow-men, lest they might communicate the poison of the disease to them; as in like manner that the torn garment, the covered lip, the cry "Unclean, unclean," (Lev. xiii. 45,) were warnings to others that they should keep aloof, lest unawares touching the lepers, or drawing into too great a nearness, they should become partakers of their disease. A miserable emptying this, as we shall see, of the meaning of these ordinances.\* All those who have examined into the matter the closest are nearly of one consent, that the sickness was incommunicable by ordinary contact from one person to another. A leper might transmit it to his children,† or the mother of a leper's children might take it from him; but it was by no ordinary contact transferable from one person to another.

All the notices in the Old Testament, as well as in other Jewish books, confirm this view, that it was in no respect a mere sanitary regulation. Thus, where the law of Moses was not observed, no such exclusion necessarily found place; Naaman the leper commanded the armies of Syria, (2 Kin. v. 1,) Gehazi, with his leprosy which never should be cleansed, talked familiarly with the king of apostate Israel. (2 Kin. viii. 5.) And even where the law of Moses was in force, the stranger and the sojourner were expressly exempted from the ordinances in relation to leprosy; which could not have been, had the disease been contagious, and the motives of the leper's exclusion been not religious but civil, since the

\* Even Michaelis, greatly as he loves to find a trivial explanation for each ordinance of the Mosaic law, yet allows (*Mos. Recht*, v. 4, p. 255,) that this cannot have been the object of these; but explains them as warnings to all other men lest they should unawares come on so disgusting a spectacle as the leper would present. But Scripture neither flatters nor knows any thing of such hard-hearted sentimentalities. Rather the poet expresses the true feeling which it would bring about in us, when he exclaims,—

"But welcome fortitude and patient cheer,  
And frequent sight of what is to be borne."

† See ROBINSON'S *Biblical Researches*, v. 1, p. 359.

danger of the spreading of the disease would have been equal in their case and in that of native Israelites.\* How, moreover, should the Levitical priests, had the disease been this creeping infection, have themselves escaped the disease, obliged as they were by their very office to submit the leper to such actual handling and closest examination? Lightfoot can only explain this by supposing in their case a perpetual miracle.

But no; the ordinances concerning leprosy had quite a different and a far deeper significance, into which it will be needful a little to enter. It is clear that the same principle which made all that had to do with death, as mourning, a grave, a corpse, the occasions of a ceremonial uncleanness, inasmuch as all these were signs and consequences of sin, might in like manner, and with a perfect consistency, have made every sickness an occasion of uncleanness, each of these being also death beginning, partial death—echoes in the body of that terrible reality, sin in the soul. But instead of this, in a gracious sparing of man, and not pushing the principle to the uttermost, God took but one sickness, one of these visible outcomings of a tainted nature, in which to testify that evil was not from him, that evil could not dwell with him; he took but one, with which to link this teaching, and that it might serve in this region of man's life as a substratum for the training of his people into the recognition of a clinging impurity, which needed a Pure and a Purifier to overcome and expel, and which no method short of his taking of our flesh could drive out. And leprosy, which was indeed the sickness of sicknesses, was through these Levitical ordinances selected of God from the whole host of maladies and diseases which had broken in upon man's body; to the end that, bearing his testimony against it, he might bear his testimony against that out of which it and all other sicknesses grew, against sin, as not from him, as grievous in his sight; and the sickness itself also as grievous, not for itself, but because it was a visible manifestation, a direct consequence, of the inner disharmony of man's spirit,

\* See all this abundantly proved in pp. 1086—1089 of the learned dissertation by Rhenferd, *De Leprâ Cutis Hebræorum*, which is to be found in MEUSCHEN'S *Nov. Test. ex Talm. illust.*, p. 1057. He concludes his disquisition on this part of the subject with these words: Ex quibus, nisi nos omnia fallunt, certè concludimus, præcipuis Judæorum magistris, traditionumque auctoribus nunquam in mentem incidisse ullam de lepræ contagio suspicionem, omnemque hanc de contagiosâ leprâ sententiam, plurimis antiquissimisque scriptoribus æquè ac Mosi planè fuisse incognitam. Compare the extract from Balsamon, in SUICER'S *Thes.*, s. v. *λεπρός*, where speaking of the customs of the Eastern Church, he says, "They frequent our churches and eat with us, in nothing hindered by the disease." In like manner there was a place for them, though a place apart, in the synagogue.

a commencement of the death, which through disobedience to God's perfect will, had found entrance into a nature made by God for immortality.

And terrible indeed, as might be expected, was that disease, round which this solemn teaching revolved. Leprosy was indeed nothing short of a living death, a poisoning of the springs, a corrupting of all the humors, of life; a dissolution little by little of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away. Aaron exactly describes the appearance which the leper presented to the eyes of the beholders, when, pleading for Miriam, he says, "Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb." (Num. xii. 12.) The disease, moreover, was incurable by the art and skill of man;\* not that the leper might not return to health; for, however rare, such cases are yet contemplated in the Levitical law. But then the leprosy left the man, not in obedience to any outward means of healing which had been applied by men, but purely and merely through the good will and mercy of God. This helplessness of man in the matter, is recognized in the speech of the king of Israel, who, when Naaman is sent to him that he may heal him, exclaims, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" (2 Kin. v. 7.) The leper, thus fearfully bearing about in the body the outward and visible tokens of sin in the soul, was handled throughout as a sinner, as one in whom sin had reached its highest manifestation, that is, as one dead in trespasses and sins. He was himself a dreadful parable of death. It is evident that Moses intended that he should be so contemplated by all the ordinances which he gave concerning him. The leper was to bear about the emblems of death, (Lev. xiii. 45,) the rent garments, that is, mourning garments, he mourning for himself as for one dead; the head bare, as they were wont to have it who were in communion with the dead, (Num. vi. 9; Ezek. xxiv. 17;) and the lip covered. (Ezek. xxiv. 17.)†

In the restoration, too, of a leper, exactly the same instruments of cleansing were in use, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet, as were used for the cleansing of one defiled through a dead body, or aught pertaining to death, and which were never in use upon any other occasion. (Compare Num. xix. 6, 13, 18, with Lev. xiv. 4—7.) No doubt

\* Cyril of Alexandria calls it *πάθος σὺν ἰάσει*.

† Spencer calls him well, *sepulcrum ambulans*; and Calvin: *Pro mortuis habitus sunt, quos lepra à sacro carni adiciebat*. And when through the Crusades leprosy had been introduced into Western Europe, it was usual to clothe the leper in a *shroud*, and to say for him the masses for the dead.

when David exclaims, "Purge me *with hyssop*, and I shall be clean," (Ps. li. 7,) he in this allusion, looking through the outward to the inward, even to the true blood of sprinkling, contemplates himself as a spiritual leper, as one whose sin had been, while he lived in it, a sin unto death, as one needing therefore absolute and entire restoration from the very furthest degree of separation from God. And being this sign and token of sin, and of sin reaching unto and culminating in death, it naturally brought about with it a total exclusion from the camp or city of God. God is not a God of the dead; he has no fellowship with death, for death is a correlative of sin; but only of the living. But the leper was as one dead, and as such was to be put out of the camp,\* (Lev. xiii. 46; Num. v. 2—4; 2 Kin. vii. 3,) or afterwards out of the city; and we find this law to have been so strictly enforced, that even the sister of Moses might not be exempted from it; (Num. xii. 14, 15;) and kings, Uzziah, (2 Chron. xxvi. 21,) and Azariah, (2 Kin. xv. 5,) themselves must submit to it; men being by this exclusion taught that what here took place in a figure, should take place in the reality with every one who was found in the death of sin: he should be shut out of the true city of God. Thus, taking up and glorifying this and like ordinances of exclusion, St. John exclaims of the New Jerusalem, "There shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." (Rev. xxi. 27.)

It need hardly be observed, that in all this it was not in the least implied that he who bore this plague was of necessity a guiltier man than his fellows; though being, as it was, this symbol of sin, it was most often the theocratic punishment, the penalty for sins committed against the theocracy, as in the cases of Miriam, of Gehazi, of Uzziah; † and we may compare Deut. xxiv. 8, where the warning, "Take heed of the plague of leprosy," is not that they diligently observe the laws about leprosy, but that they beware lest this plague of leprosy come upon them, lest by their disobedience they incur the theocratic penalty. ‡ The Jews themselves termed it "The finger of God," and emphatically, "The stroke." They said that it attacked first a man's house, and if he did not turn, his clothing; and then, if he persisted in sin, himself: § a

\* Herodotus (l. 1, c. 138) mentions the same law of exclusion as existing among the Persians, who accounted in like manner that leprosy was an especial visitation on account of especial sins.

† No doubt the strange apocryphal tradition of Judas Iscariot perishing by the long misery of a leprosy, in its most horrible form of elephantiasis, had the same origin. (See GFRÖRER, *Die Heilige Sage*, v. 1, p. 179.)

‡ See Rhenferd's dissertation, *De Leprà Cutis*, in MEUSCHEN'S *N. T. ex Talm. illustr.*, p. 1082.

§ See MOLITOR'S *Philosophie der Geschichte*, v. 3, p. 191.

fine symbol, whether the fact was so or not, of the manner in which God's judgments, if men refuse to listen to them, reach ever nearer to the centre of their life. So, too, they said that a man's true repentance was the one condition of his leprosy leaving him.\*

Seeing then that leprosy was this outward and visible sign of the innermost spiritual corruption, this sacrament of death, there could be no fitter form of evil over which the Lord of life should display his power. He will prove himself the conqueror of death in life, as of death completed. This victory of his over this most terrible form of physical evil is fitly brought out as a testimony of his Messiahship: "The lepers are cleansed." (Matt. xi. 5.) Nor may we doubt that the terribleness of the infliction, the extreme suffering with which it was linked, the horror which must have filled the sufferer's mind, as he marked its slow but inevitable progress, to be arrested by no human hand, the ghastly hideousness of its unnatural whiteness, (Num. xii. 10; Exod. iv. 6; 2 Kin. v. 27,) must all have combined to draw out his pity,† who was not merely the mighty, but no less the loving, Physician and Healer of the bodies as of the souls of men. The medical details concerning this sickness, and the differences between one kind and another, as between the white leprosy, (λευκή.) which among the Jews was the most frequent, and the yet more terrible elephantiasis, thought by many to have been that with which Job was visited, and so named because in it the feet swelled to an elephantine size, would be here out of place. It is time to return to the consideration of this particular act of healing.

The leper with whom we now have to do, came "*and worshipped*" Jesus—an act of profound reverence, as from an inferior to a superior, yet not in itself a recognition of any thing specially divine in him to whom it was offered. The words with which he expresses what he would have from the Lord are remarkable as the utterance of a simple and a humble faith, which is willing to abide the issue, whatever that may be, and having declared its desire, to leave the complying with it or not to a higher wisdom and love: "*Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*"‡ There is no questioning here of the power; nothing

\* Thus Jerome, following earlier Jewish expositors, will explain the "smitten of God," (Isai. liii. 4,) as = leprosus, and out of that passage and the general belief in leprosy as a νόσος θεϊλατος, upgrew the old Jewish tradition of the Messiah being a leper. (See HENGSTENBERG'S *Christologie*, v. 1, p. 382.)

† Cf. Mark i. 41, 'Ο ἐὶ Ἰησοῦς σπλαγχνισθεῖς.

‡ Yet the Romanists in vain endeavor to draw from this passage an approval of the timor dillidentia in our prayers which have relation to the things of eternal life, such as the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Spirit. These we are to ask, assuredly



of *his* unbelief who said, "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us and help us." (Mark ix. 22.) Whereupon the Lord "*put forth his hand and touched him,*"\* ratifying and approving his utterance of faith, by making the concession of his request in the very words wherein the request itself had been embodied: "*I will, be thou clean.*"† This touching of the unclean by Christ is itself remarkable, seeing that such contact had been forbidden in the Law. (Lev. xiv. 46.) The adversaries of the Law, the Gnostics of old, said that Christ did this to mark his contempt for its ordinances, and in witness that he did not recognize it as coming from the good Deity.‡ But Tertullian gives the true answer to this.§ He first shows what was the deeper meaning of forbidding to touch the ceremonially unclean, namely, that we should not defile our souls through being partakers in other men's sins, as St. Paul, with allusion, no doubt, to these ceremonial prohibitions, and giving them their higher spiritual significance, exclaims, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." (2 Cor. vi. 17.) And these outer prohibitions held good for all,

believing that we have them. There is this uncertainty in the leper's request, because he is asking a temporal benefit, which must always be asked under conditions, and which may be refused, though the refusing is indeed a granting of the petition in a higher form. (See GERHARD'S *Loc. Theoll.*, loc. 17, § 138.)

\* Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 35): Quoniam ipse erat authenticus Pontifex Dei Patris, inspexit illos secundum Legis arcanum, significantis Christum esse verum disceptatorem et elimatorem humanarum macularum.

† Bengel: Echo prompta ad fidem leprosi maturam. Ipsa leprosi oratio continebat verba responsionis optatæ.

‡ Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 9): Ut æmulus Legis tetigit leprosum nihil faciens præceptum legis, per contemptum inquinamenti.

§ Ibid: Non pigebit . . . figuratæ legis vim ostendere; quæ in exemplo leprosi non contingendi, immo ab omni commercio submovendi, communicationem prohibebat hominis delictis commaculati; cum qualibus et apostolus cibum quoque vetat sumere; participari enim stigmata delictorum, quasi ex contagione, si quis se cum peccatore miscuerit. Itaque Dominus volens altius intelligi Legem, per carnalia spiritalia significantem; et hoc nomine non destruens sed magis extruens quam pertinentius volebat agnoscere, tetigit leprosum, à quo etsi homo inquinari potuisset, Deus utique non inquinaretur, incontaminabilis scilicet. Ita non præscribetur illi quod debuerit legem observare, et non contingere immundum, quem contactus immundi non erat inquinaturus. He is not so successful in his interpretation of the spiritual significance, when elsewhere (*De Pudicit.*, c. 20,) he goes into more details in the matter. So Calvin (in loc): Ea est in Christo puritas, quæ omnes sordes et inquinamenta absorbeat, neque se contaminat leprosum tangeudo, neque Legem transgreditur; and he beautifully finds in his stretching forth the hand and touching, a symbol of the Incarnation: Nec tamen quidquam inde maculæ contraxit, sed integer manens, sordes omnes nostras exhausit, et nos perfudit suâ sanctitate. So H. de Sto. Victore: Leporam tetigit, et mundus permansit, quia veram humanitatis formam sumpsit, et culpam non contraxit.

till the coming in of him who was incontaminable, in whom first the tide of this world's evil was arrested and rolled back. Another would have defiled himself by touching the leper; but he, himself remaining undefiled, cleansed him whom he touched; for in him life overcame death,—and health, sickness,—and purity, defilement. In him, in its most absolute sense, that word was fulfilled, “Unto the pure all things are pure.”

Ambrose and many others suppose that the Lord's injunction to the man that he should not divulge his cure, was intended to teach his followers that they too should avoid ostentation in their acts of mercy, lest, as he says, they should be themselves taken with a worse leprosy than any which they healed.\* But if the motive to this prohibition was external, and had not reference to the inner moral condition of the receiver of the benefit, I should think that our Lord's purpose was more likely this, that his stiller ministry might not be hindered or disturbed by the inopportune flowing to him of multitudes, who should be drawn to him merely by the hope of sharing the same worldly benefits, as we see was the case on this very occasion, (Mark i. 45,) nor yet by the premature violence of his enemies, roused to a more active and keener hate by the great things which were published of him. (John xi. 46, 47.†) But there has been already occasion to observe, that probably a deeper purpose lay at the root of this injunction to silence, as of the opposite command to go and proclaim the great things of God's mercy. The precepts to tell or to conceal were interchangeably given according to the different moral conditions of the different persons whom Christ healed. On the present occasion it seems very probable, according to the suggestion of Grotius and Bengel, that the words, “*See thou tell no man,*” are to be taken with this limitation,—“till thou hast shown thyself to the priests; lest if a rumor of these things go before thee, the priests at Jerusalem, out of envy, out of a desire to depreciate my work, may deny either that thou wast before a leper, or else that thou art now truly cleansed.”‡ We may find perhaps indications of something of

\* *Exp. in Luc.*, l. 5, c. 5: *Sed ne lepra transire possit in medicum, unusquisque Dominicæ humilitatis exemplo jaçantiam vitet. Cur enim præcipitur nemini dicere, nisi ut doceret non vulganda nostra beneficia, sed premeda? So Chrysostom: Ἄνθρωπος ἰσχυρῶς παροικεῖσθαι καὶ ἀπειθεῖσθαι.*

† See a good note by Hammond on Matt. viii. 4. Calvin: *Tanta erat vulgi opportunitas, in flagitandis miraculis, ut non restaret doctrinæ locus*

‡ Thus the *Auct. Oper. Imperf.* (*Hom.* 21: *Ideo enim jubet offerre munera, ut si postmodum vellent eum expellere, diceret eis: Munera quasi à mundato suscepistis, et quomodo me quasi leprosum expellit? Si leprosus adhuc fui, munera accipere non debuistis quasi à mundato: si autem mundus factus sum, repellere non debetis quasi leprosum.* Witsius (*De Mirac. Jesu.* l. 1, p. 32): *Ideirco addidit Jesus hæc à se ita*

this kind in the words of St. Mark, "*he forthwith sent him away,*" or, put him forth;\* he would allow no lingering, but required him to hasten on his errand, lest the report of what had been done should outrun him.

Some understand the words, "*for a testimony unto them,*" as meaning "for a testimony even to these gainsayers that I am come, not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it,—to remove nothing, not even a shadow, till I have brought in the substance in its room.† These Levitical offerings I still allow and uphold, since that to which they point is not yet fully given."‡ But I cannot doubt that the true meaning of the word is "*for a testimony against them* ;§ for a witness against their unbelief, who are refusing to give credence to me, even while I am attesting myself to be all which I claim to be, by such mighty works as these ; works of which they themselves shall have ratified the reality by the acceptance of thy gift, by thy re-admission, as one truly cleansed, into the congregation of the people."|| (John v. 36.) For the purpose of his going to the priest was this, that the priest might ascertain the fact, if really his leprosy had left him, (Lev. xiv. 3,) and, if so, might accept his gift,¶ and offer it as an atonement for him ; and might then, when all was duly accomplished, pronounce him clean and admit him anew into the congregation of Israel.\*\*

juberi *eis μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς*, ne deinceps ullâ specie negari miraculum possit, et ut, dum eorum judicio approbatus, munus obtulisset, testimonium contra se haberent, impie se facere, quod Christo oblectarentur.

\* *Ἐξέβαλεν αὐτόν.*

† So Tertullian in his controversy with the Gnostics (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 9) : Quantum enim ad gloriam humanæ aversionem pertinebat, vetuit eum divulgare, quantum autem ad tutelam Legis, jussit ordinem impleri. Bengel: Ut testimonium illis exhibeatur, de Messîâ præsentem, Legi non deroganti.

‡ Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.*, l. 2, qu. 3) : Quia nondum esse cæperat sacrificium sanctum sanctorum, quod corpus ejus est.

§ Cf Mark vi. 11, where the same phrase, *eis μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς*, occurs with the parallel Luke ix. 5, where it appears *eis μαρτύριον ἐπ' αὐτοῖς*, and where the context, even without this additional proof, would show beyond a doubt what the meaning was.

|| Maldonatus: Ut inexcusabiles essent sacerdotes, si in ipsum non crederent. cujus miracula probâssent.

¶ *Δῶρον* is used for a *bloody offering* by the LXX., as Gen. iv. 4 ; Lev. i. 2, 3, 10. So also several times in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as viii. 4, where the *ἑσῶι* is evidently equivalent to the *εὐωδία τε καὶ θυσίας* of the verse preceding, therefore also of v. 1. Cf. Matt. v. 23. Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 9,) brings out too much the idea of a *thank-offering* in this gift which the man is bidden to offer, which properly it was not, though the words were admirable, applied to such: Argumenta enim figurata utpote prophetatæ legis adhuc in suis imaginibus tuebantur, quâ significabant hominem quondam peccatorem, verbo mox Dei emaculatum, offerre debere munus Deo apud templum, orationem scilicet et actionem gratiarum apud Ecclesiam, per Christum Jesum, catholicum Patris Sacerdotem.

\*\* All the circumstances of the leper's cleansing yielded themselves so aptly to the

theory of Church satisfactions, as it gradually formed itself in the middle ages, that it is not to be wondered at that it was used at least as an illustration, often as an argument. Yet even then we find the great truth, of Christ the alone Cleanser, often brought out as the most prominent. Thus by Gratian (*De Pœnitentiâ*, Dist. i.): Ut Dominus ostenderet quod non sacerdotali iudicio, sed largitate divinæ gratiæ peccato emundatur, leprosum tangendo mundavit, et postea sacerdoti sacrificium ex lege offerre præcepit. Leprosus enim tangitur, cùm respectu divinæ pietatis mens peccatoris illustrata compungitur. . . . Leprosus semetipsum sacerdoti repræsentat, dum peccatum suum sacerdoti pœnitens confitetur. Sacrificium ex lege offert, dum satisfactionem Ecclesiæ iudicio sibi impositam factis exsequitur. Sed antequam ad sacerdotem perveniat, emundatur, dum per contritionem cordis ante confessionem oris peccati veniâ indulgetur. Cf. Pet. Lombard (*Sent.*, l. 4, dist. 18): Domnus leprosum sanitate prius per se restituit, deinde ad sacerdotes misit, quorum iudicio ostenderetur mundatus. . . . Quia etsi aliquis apud Deum sit solutus, non tamen in facie Ecclesiæ solutus habetur, nisi per iudicium sacerdotis. In solvendis ergo culpis vel retinendis ita operatur sacerdos evangelicus et iudicat, sicut olim legalis in illis, qui contaminati erant leprâ, quæ peccatum signat.

## XI.

### THE HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.

MATT. viii. 5—13; LUKE vii. 1—10.

THERE has been already occasion to speak of the utter impossibility of this healing being one and the same with that of the nobleman's son recorded by St. John. (iv. 43.) But while we may not thus seek to harmonize two narratives which relate to circumstances entirely different, yet there is still matter here remaining on which the harmonist may exercise his skill: there are two independent accounts of this miracle, one given by St. Matthew, the other by St. Luke,—and, according to the first Evangelist, the centurion comes in his own person to ask the boon which he desires; according to the third he sends others as intercessors between himself and the Lord, with other differences which flow out of this. There can be no doubt that we are to accept the latter as the more strictly literal account of the circumstance, as it actually came to pass;—St. Matthew, who is briefer, telling it as though the centurion had done in his own person what, in fact, he did by the intervention of others—an exchange of persons of which all historical narrations and all the language of our common life is full.\* (Compare Mark x. 35, with Matt. xx. 20, for another example of the same.)

\* Faustus the Manichæan uses the apparent divergences of the two narrations, namely, that in one the Centurion pleaded in his own person, in the other by intervention of Jewish elders, and the greater fulness of the one than of the other, it being said in one that "many shall come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God," while this is omitted in the other, to cast a slight and suspicion upon both. It is of course this last declaration which makes him bent any how on getting rid of this history. The calumniator of the Old Covenant, he cannot endure to hear of the chiefs of that covenant sitting down at the first places in the heavenly banquet. Augustine's reply contains much which is admi-

This centurion, probably one of the Roman garrison of Capernaum, was by birth a heathen; but like him in the Acts (x. 1,) who bore the same office, was one of the many who were at this time deeply feeling the emptiness of all polytheistic religions, and who had attached themselves by laxer or closer bonds to the congregation of Israel and the worship of Jehovah, finding in Judaism a satisfaction of some of the deepest needs of their souls, and a promise of the satisfaction of all. He was one among the many who are distinguished from the seed of Abraham, yet described as fearing God, or worshipping God, of whom we read so often in the Acts,—the proselytes, whom the providence of God had so wonderfully prepared in all the great cities of the Greek and Roman world as a link of communication between Gentile and Jew, in contact with both,—holding to the first by their race, and to the last by their religion; and who must have greatly helped to the ultimate fusion of both into one Christian Church.

But with the higher matters which he had learned from his intercourse with the people of the covenant, he had learned no doubt this, that all heathens, all “sinners of the Gentiles,” were “without;” that there was a middle wall of partition between them and the children of the stock of Abraham; that they were to worship only as in the outer court, not presuming to draw near to the holy place. And thus he did not himself approach, but sent others to, Jesus, in whom he recognized a being of a higher world, entreating him, by them, “*that he would come and heal his servant,*” a servant who, as St. Luke adds, “*was dear unto him,*”<sup>\*</sup> but now “*was sick and ready to die.*” The elders of the Jews, whom he employed on this errand, were his willing messengers, and appear zealously to have executed their commission, pleading for him as one whose affection for, and active well-doing towards, the chosen people

orable on the unfair way in which the opposers of the truth find or make discrepancies where indeed there are none,—as though one narrator telling some detail in an event, contradicts another, who passes over that detail,—one saying that a person did this, contradicts another who states more particularly that he did it by the agency and intervention of another. All that we demand, he says, is, that men should be as just to Scripture as to any other historic record; should suffer it to speak to men as they are wont to speak one to another (*Con. Faust.*, l. 33, c. 7, 8): Quid ergo, cum legimus, obliviscimur quemadmodum loqui soleamus? An Scriptura Dei aliter nobiscum fuerat quam nostro mora locutura. Cf. *De Cons. Erang.* l. 2, c. 20.

<sup>\*</sup> Calvin: Lucas hoc modo dubitationem prævenit, quæ subire poterat lectorum animos: scimus enim, non habitos fuisse servos eo in pretio, ut de ipsorum vitâ tam anxii essent domini, nisi qui singulari industriâ vel fide vel aliâ virtute sibi gratiam acquisierant. Significat ergo Lucas non vulgare fuisse sordidumque mancipium, sed fideliem et raris dotibus ornatum servum qui eximâ gratiâ apud dominum polleret: hinc tanta illius vitæ cura et tum studiosa commendatio.

deserved this return of favor: "*for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.*"

But presently even this request which he had made seemed to him too great a boldness. In his true and ever-deepening humility he counted it a presumption to have asked, though by the intervention of others, the presence under his roof of so exalted a personage. It was not merely that he was a heathen, and so might claim no near approach to the King of Israel; but there was, no doubt, besides this, and mingling with this, a deep and inward feeling of his own personal unworthiness and unfitness for a close communion with a holy being, which caused him again to send, beseeching the Lord to approach no nearer, but only to speak the word, and he knew that straightway his servant would be healed. And thus, in Augustine's words, "while he counted himself unworthy that Christ should enter into his doors, he was counted worthy that Christ should enter into his heart,"\*—a far better boon: for Christ sat down in the houses of men, as of that proud, self-righteous Pharisee, whose hearts were not for this the less empty of his presence. But this centurion received *him* in his heart, whom he did not receive in his house.† And, indeed, every little trait of his character, as it comes out in the sacred narrative, combines to show him as one in whom the seed of God's word would find the ready and prepared soil of a good and honest heart. For not to speak of those prime conditions, faith and humility, which in so eminent a degree shone forth in him,—the evident affection which he had won from those Jewish elders, the zeal which had stirred him to build a house for the worship of the true God, his earnest care and anxiety about a slave—one so generally excluded from all earnest human sympathies on the part of his master, that even a Cicero thinks it needful to excuse himself for feeling deeply the death of such an one in his household,—all these traits of character combine to present him to us as one of those "children of God" that were scattered abroad in the world, and whom Christ was to gather together into the one fellowship of his Church. (John xi. 52.)

The manner is remarkable in which the centurion makes easier to himself his act of faith, by the help of an analogy drawn from the circle of things with which he himself is familiar, by a comparison which he

\* *Serm.* 62, c. 1: Dicendo se indignum præstitit dignum, non in cujus parietes, sed in cujus cor Christus intraret. Neque hoc diceret cum tantâ fide et humilitate, nisi illum quem timebat intrare in domum suam, corde gestaret. Nam non erat magna felicitas si Dominus Jesus intraret in parietes ejus et non esset in pectore ejus. (*Luc.* vii. 36.)

† Augustine (*Serm.* 77, c. 8): Tecto non recipiebat, corde receperat. Quanto humilior, tantò capacior, tantò plenior. Colles enim aquam repellunt, valles implentur.

borrowed from his own military experience.\* He knows that Christ's word will be sufficient, for he adds, "I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." His argument is here from the less to the greater. "I am," he would say, "one occupying only a subordinate place, set under authority, a subaltern, with tribunes and commanders over me. Yet, notwithstanding, those that are under me, obey me. My word is potent with them. I have power to send them hither and thither, and they go at my bidding, so that sitting still I can yet have the things accomplished which I would. How much more thou, who art not set, as I am, in a subordinate place, but who art as a prince over the host of heaven,† who wilt have angels and spirits to obey thy word and run swiftly at thy command. It needs not then that thou comest to my house; do thou only commission one of these genii of healing, who will execute speedily the errand of grace on which thou shalt send him."‡ His view of Christ's relation to the spi-

\* Bengel: Sapientia fidelis ex ruditate militari pulchrè elucens.

† The στρατιά οὐράνιος. How true a notion this indeed was, which in his simple faith the centurion had conceived for himself, we see from those words of our Lord's, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. xxvi. 53.) Jerome (in loc.): Volens ostendere Dominum quoque non per adventum tantum corporis, sed per angelorum ministeria posse implere quod vellet.

‡ Severus (in CRAMER'S *Catena*): Εἰ γὰρ ἐγὼ στρατιώτης ὢν, καὶ ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν βασιλέως τελεῶν, τοῖς δορυφόροις ἐντέλλομαι, πῶς οὐ μᾶλλον αὐτός ὁ τῶν ἄνω καὶ ἀγγελικῶν ἐντάμεινον ποιητῆς, ὃ θελεῖς ἐρεῖς καὶ γενήσεται; and Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps. xlii. 9*, and *Serm. lxi. c. 2*): Si ergo ego, inquit, homo sub potestate, jubendi habeo potestatem, quid tu possis, cui omnes serviunt potestates? And Bernard more than once brings out this as an eminent and characteristic feature of his humility. Thus *Ep. 392*: O prudens et verè corde humilis anima! dicturus quod prælatus esset militibus, repressit extollentiam confessione subjectionis: immo præmisit subjectionem, ut pluris sibi esset quod suberat, quàm quod præerat; and beautifully, *De Off. Episc.*, c. 8: Non jactabat potestatem, quam nec solam protulit, nec priorem. . . . Præmissa siquidem est humilitas, ne altitudo præcipitet. Nec enim locum invenit arrogantia, ubi tam clarum humilitatis insigne præcesserat. Such explanation appears preferable to any of those which make ἄνθρωπος ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν, a man in authority. Rettig, (*Theol. Stud. u. Krit.*, v. 11, p. 472.) reading with Lachmann, ἄνθρ. ὑπὸ ἐξουσίᾳ. τὰ σὺ σὸ μὲ ν ο ς, (which last word, however, should not have been admitted into the text,) has an ingenious but untenable explanation in the latter and less eligible sense. Different from all these, and entirely original, is the view of the passage taken by the *Auct. Oper. Imperf.*, who agrees so far with the right interpretation that he makes ἄνθρωπος ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν, a man in a subordinate position; but then will not allow, but expressly denies, that it is thus a comparison by way of contrast between himself and the Lord, which the centurion is drawing,—that he is magnifying the Lord's highest place by comparing it with his own only subordinate, but that rather he is in all things likening the one to the other:



ritual kingdom is as original as it is grand; and it is so truly that of the Roman officer: the Lord appears to him as the true Cæsar and *Imperator*, the highest over the hierarchy, not of earth, but of heaven. (Col. i. 16.)

In all this there was so wonderful a union of childlike faith and profound humility, that it is not strange to read that the Lord himself was filled with admiration: "*When Jesus heard it, he marvelled,\* and said to them that followed, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*"\* It is notable that St. Matthew alone records these words, which beforehand we should rather have expected to have found recorded by St. Luke. For it is he, the companion of the apostle to the Gentiles, that for the most part loves to bring out the side of our Lord's ministry, on which it looked not merely to the Jewish nation but to the heathen world. In these words, and in those which follow, is a solemn warning, on the Lord's part, to his Jewish hearers of their danger of losing privileges, which now were theirs, but which yet they

"As I am under worldly authorities, and yet have those whom I may send, so thou albe it under thine heavenly Father, hast yet an heavenly host at thy bidding." *Ego sum homo sub potestate alterius, tamen habeo potestatem jubendi eis qui sub me sunt. Nec enim impediō jubere minores, propter quod ipse sum sub majoribus; sed ab illis quidem jubeor, sub quibus sum; illis autem jubeo, qui sub me sunt: sic et tu, quamvis sub potestate Patris sis, secundum quod homo es, habes tamen potestatem jubendi angelis tuis, nec impediō jubere inferioribus, propter quod ipse habes superiorem.* This interpretation, though just capable of a fair meaning, is probably the outcoming of the Arian tendencies of the author.

\* But since all wonder, properly so called, arises from the meeting with something unexpected and hitherto unknown, how could the Lord, to whom all things were known, be said to marvel? To this it has been answered that Christ did not so much actually wonder, as commend to us that which was worthy of our admiration. Thus Augustine (*De Gen., Con. Man., l. 1, c. 8*): *Quod mirabatur Dominus, nobis mirandum esse significabat*; and he asks in another place, (*Con. Adv. Leg. et Proph., l. 1, c. 7*), how should not he have known before the faith, which he himself had created? (*An verò alius eam in corde centurionis operabatur, quam ipse qui mirabatur?*) There is against this, that it seems to bring an unreality into parts of our Lord's conduct, as though he did some things for show and the effect which they would have on others, instead of all his actions having their deepest root in his own nature, being the truthful exponents of his own most inmost being. On the other hand, to say that according to his human nature he might have been ignorant of some things, seems to threaten a Nestorian severance of the Person of Christ. But the whole question of the *Communio idiomatum*, with its precipices on either side, is one of the hardest in the whole domain of theology. (See AQUINAS, *Sum. Theol.*, 3<sup>a</sup>. qu. 15, art. 8, and GERHARD'S *Loc. Theol.*, l. 4, p. 2, c. 4.

† Augustine: *In olivâ non inveni, quod inveni in oleastro. Ergo oliva superbiens præcidatur: oleaster humilis inseratur. Vide inserentem, vide præcidentem. Cf. In Joh., Tract. 16, ad finem.*

should see pass over from them into the possession of others.\* Because of their unbelief, they, the natural branches of the olive tree, should be broken off; and in their room the wild olive should be grafted in: "*Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,*" shall be partakers of the heavenly festival, which shall be at the inauguration of the kingdom; and from which they who were first invited should be excluded.

And then to him, or his messengers, it was said, "*Go thy way, and as thou hast believed,† so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour;*"—not merely was there a remission of the strength of the disease, but it altogether left him. There has sometimes been a difficulty concerning the exact nature of the complaint from which he was thus graciously delivered. In St. Matthew the centurion describes it as palsy, with which however the "*grievously tormented*" does not seem altogether to agree, nor yet St. Luke's words that he was "*ready to die,*" since in itself it is neither accompanied with these violent paroxysms of pain, nor is it in its nature mortal. But paralysis with the contraction of the joints is accompanied with strong pain, and when united, as it much oftener is in the hot climates of the East and of Africa than among us, with tetanus, both causes extreme suffering, and would rapidly bring on dissolution.\*

\* Augustine: *Alienigenæ carne, domestici corde.*

† Bernard (*Serm. 3, De Animâ*): *Oleum misericordiæ in vase fiduciæ ponit.*

‡ At I Macc. ix. 55, 56, it is said of Alcimus, who is described "as taken with a palsy," that he died presently "with great torment," (*μετὶ βασάνου μεγάλης*), as here this servant is described as *δεινῶς βασανιζόμενος*. (See WINER'S *Real Wörterbuch*, s. v. *Paralytische*.) In St. Matthew and St. Mark those thus afflicted are always *παραλυτικοὶ*, in St. Luke, both in his Gospel and in the Acts, *παραλελυμένοι*.

## XII.

### THE DEMONIAK IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF CAPERNAUM.

MARK i. 23—26 ; LUKE iv. 33—36.

THE healing of this demoniak, the second miracle of the kind which the Evangelists record at any length, is very far from offering so much remarkable as some other works of the same kind, yet it is not without its peculiar features. That which it has most remarkable, although that is not without its parallels, (see Mark i. 34 ; Matt. viii. 29,) is the testimony which the evil spirit bears to Christ, and *his* refusal to accept that testimony. In either of these circumstances, this history stands parallel to the account which we have in the Acts (xvi. 16—18) of the girl with the spirit of Apollo, who bore witness to Paul and his company, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation," whereat, in like manner, Paul was "grieved," and would not permit it any more.

Our Lord was teaching, as he was wont upon a Sabbath, in the synagogue of Capernaum ; and the people were already wondering at the authority with which he taught. But he was not only mighty in word, but also mighty in work, and it was ordained by the providence of his Heavenly Father, that the opportunity should here be offered him for making yet deeper the impression on his hearers, for here also confirming the word with signs following. "*There was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit ;*" and this unclean spirit felt at once that One was nigh, who was stronger than all the kingdom whereunto he belonged : hitherto his goods had been at peace ; but now there was come One who should divide the spoil. And with the instinct and consciousness of this danger which so nearly threatened the kingdom of hell, he cried out,—not the man himself, but the evil spirit which had usurped

dominion over him,—“saying, *Let us alone ;\* what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ?† art thou come to destroy us ? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.*” Earth has not recognized her king, has not yet seen him through his disguise ; but heaven and hell alike bear witness unto him : “the devils also believe and tremble.”

Yet here this question arises, what could have been the motive to this testimony, thus borne ? It is strange that the evil spirit should thus, without compulsion, proclaim to men *his* presence, who was come to be the destroyer of the kingdom of the devil. Rather we should expect that he would have denied, or sought to obscure, the glory of his Person. It cannot be said that this was an unwilling confession to the truth, forcibly extorted by Christ’s superior power, since it displeased him in whose favor it professed to be borne, and was by him silenced at once. It remains either, with Theophylact and Grotius, to take this as the cry of base and abject fear, that with fawning and with flattery would fain avert from itself the doom, which with Christ’s presence in the world appears so near ;—to compare, as Jerome does, this exclamation to that of the fugitive slave, dreaming of nothing but stripes and torments when he encounters his well-known lord, and who would now by any means turn away his anger :‡ or else, and so Christ’s immediately stopping his mouth would seem to argue, this testimony was intended only to do harm, to injure the estimation of him in whose behalf it was borne. It was to bring the truth itself into suspicion and discredit, when it was borne witness to by the spirit of lies :§ and thus these confessions to Christ may have been intended only to anticipate and to mar his great purpose and plan, even as we see Mark iii. 22 following hard on Mark iii. 11. Therefore the Lord would not allow this testimony ; *Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him ;*|| not as Michael the archangel, “*The*

\* *Ea*, not the imperative from *ἐάω*, but an interjection of terror, wrung out by the *φοβερὰ ἐκδοχὴ κρίσεως*, (Heb. x. 27,)—unless indeed the interjection was originally this imperative.

† *Ναζαρονός* here. The word appears in the New Testament in two other forms, *Ναζαράτος* and *Ναζωραῖος*. Of all these the last is the most frequent.

‡ Grotius: *Vult Jesum blanditiis demulcere, cui se certando imparem erat expertus.* Jerome (*Comm. in Matth. ix.*): *Velut si servi fugitivi post multum temporis dominum suum vident ; nihil aliud nisi de verberibus deprecantur.*

§ Thus, with a slight difference in the view, Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 7) : *Increpuit eum Jesus, planè ut invidiosum et in ipsâ confessione petulantem et malè adulantem, quasi hæc esset summa gloria Christi, si ad perditionem dæmonum venisset, et non potius ad hominum salutem.*

|| Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 8) : *Illius erat, præconium immundi spiritûs respuere, cui Sancti abundabant.* Calvin : *Duplex potest esse ratio, cur loqui non sineret una generalis quod nondum maturum plenæ revelationis tempus advenerat ; altera spe-*

*Lord rebuke thee,*" (Jude 9,) but in his own name and in his own power.

It might seem as though the evil spirit was not altogether and at once obedient to the word of Christ, that it was not altogether a word of power; since he bade him to hold his peace, and yet in the next verse it is said, that "*he cried with a loud voice,*" as he was leaving the man. (Cf. Acts viii. 7.) But in truth he was obedient to this command of silence; he did not *speak* any more, and that was the thing which our Lord meant to forbid; this cry was nothing but an inarticulate cry of rage and pain. Neither is there any contradiction between St. Luke, (iv. 35,) who says that the evil spirit "*hurt him not,*" and St. Mark, according to whom he "*tare*" him: he did not do him any permanent injury; no doubt what evil he could do him he did. Even St. Luke says that he cast him on the ground; with which the phrase of the earlier Evangelist, that he threw him into strong convulsions, in fact consents. We have at Mark ix. 26 an analogous case, only with worse symptoms accompanying the going out of the foul spirit; for what the devil cannot keep as his own, he will, if he can, destroy; even as Pharaoh never treated the children of Israel worse than just when they were escaping from his grasp. Something similar is evermore finding place; and Satan vexes with temptations and with buffetings none so much as those who are in the act of being delivered from under his dominion for ever.

cialis, quod illos repudiabat præcones ac testes suæ divinitatis, qui laude suâ nihil aliud quam maculam, et sinistram opinionem aspergere illi poterant. Atque hæc posterior indubia est, quia testatum oportuit esse hostile dissidium, quod habebat æternæ salutis et vitæ auctor cum mortis principe ejusque ministris.

### XIII.

#### THE HEALING OF SIMON'S WIFE'S MOTHER.

MATT. viii. 14—17; MARK i. 29—31; LUKE iv. 38—39.

THIS miracle is by St. Mark and St. Luke linked immediately and in a manner that marks an historic connection, with that which has just come under our notice. The sacred historians go on to speak of our Lord, saying, “*And he arose out of the synagogue, and went into Simon's house.*”—in St. Mark, “*the house of Simon and Andrew.*” The stronger personality of Peter causes Andrew, the earlier called, and the leader of his brother to Jesus, probably also the elder brother, here as elsewhere to fall into the background. We may infer that he went on this Sabbath day to eat bread there. (Cf. Luke xiv. 1.)\* Being arrived, it was told him of Simon's wife's mother, who “*was taken with a great fever, and they besought him for her.*” Here, again, we have the use of a remarkable phrase: Jesus “*rebuked the fever.*” as at other times he “*rebuked*” the winds and the waves; and with such effect that it left her, and not in that state of extreme weakness and exhaustion which fever usually leaves behind when in the ordinary course of things it has abated: † it left her not gradually convalescent: but so entire and

\* Maldonatus is greatly troubled that Peter should have a house, while it has been said before that he “*left all.*” and to allow this really to have been Simon's house appears to him to militate against the perfection of his state. His explanation, and that of most of the Romish expositors is, that this house was one which *had been* Peter's, and which he had made over to his wife's mother, when he determined to follow Christ in the absolute renunciation of all things. It is needless; the renunciation was entire in will, see Matt. xix. 27, and ready in act to be carried out into all its details, as necessity arose.

† Jerome (*Comm. in Matt.*, in loc.) observes this: *Natura hominum istiusmodi est, ut post febrem magis lassescant corpora, et incipiente sanitate ægrotationis mala sentiant*

unwonted was her cure, that "*immediately she arose and ministered unto them,*"—was able to provide for them what was necessary for their entertainment;—a pattern, as has been often observed, in this to every one that has been restored to spiritual health, that he should use this strength in ministering to Christ and to his people.\*

The fame of this miracle and that which immediately preceded it on the same day, spread so rapidly, that "*when the even was come,*" or as St. Mark has it, "*when the sun did set,*" they brought to him many more that were variously afflicted. There are two explanations of this little circumstance, which all three Evangelists are careful to record, that it was not till the sun was setting or had actually set, that they brought these sick to Jesus;—either, as Hammond and Olshausen suggest, that they waited till the heat of the middle day, which these sick and suffering were ill able to bear, was past, and brought them in the cool of the evening; or else to say that this day being the Sabbath, (cf. Mark i. 21, 29, 32,) they were unwilling to violate the sacred rest of the day, which they counted they would have done by bringing their sick to be healed; and so, ere they would do this, waited till the Sabbath was ended. It did end, as is well known, at sunset. Thus Chrysostom in one place,† although in another he sees in it more generally a sign of the faith and eagerness of the people, who even when the day was spent, still came streaming to Christ, and laying their sick at his feet.

The quotation which St. Matthew makes from Isaiah, after he has recorded the numerous healings which Christ upon that day effected, is not without its difficulties; "*that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.*"‡ The difficulty does not lie in the fact that St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 24,) quotes the same verse rather as setting forth the Messiah as the bearer of the sins than the healer of the sicknesses of his people. As far as the words go, St. Matthew is nearer to the original, which declares he came under our sicknesses and our sorrows, the penal consequence of our sins. And any apparent difference between the two sacred writers of the New Testament vanishes when we keep in mind the intimate

\* Gerhard (*Harm. Evang.*, c. 38): Simul verò docemur, quando spiritualiter sanati sumus, ut membra nostra præbeamus arma justitiæ Dei [Deo?] et ipsi serviamus in justitiâ et sanctitate coram ipso, inservientes proximo, et membris Christi, sicut hæc muliercula Christo et discipulis ministrat.

† In CRAMER'S *Catena*, v. 1, p. 278.

‡ St. Matthew here forsakes the Septuagint, which would not have answered his purpose (ὄψτος τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει, καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται,) and gives an independent translation.

connection which in Scripture ever appears between moral and physical suffering; and not in Scripture only; for many, probably all, languages have a word answering to our "evil," which bears in its double meaning of sin and of calamity, the deepest witness—for no witness is so deep as the involuntary witness of language—to this connection.

But the application of the verse is more embarrassing. Those who have best right to be heard on the matter, deny that "bore" can mean "bore away," or that "took" can be accepted in the sense of "removed," and affirm that the words must mean a taking *upon himself* the sufferings and sorrows from which he delivered his people. But in what sense did our Lord take upon himself the sicknesses which he healed? Does it not seem rather that he abolished them, and removed them altogether out of the way? It is no doubt a perfectly Scriptural thought, that Christ is the *κάζαρμα*, the piaculum, who is to draw to himself all the evils of the world, in whom all are to centre, that in him all may be abolished and done away;—yet he did not *become* this through the healing of diseases, any more than through any other isolated acts of his life and conversation. He was not more this piacular expiation after he had healed these sicknesses than before. We can understand his being said in his death and in his passion to come himself under the burden of those sufferings and pains from which he released others; but how can this be affirmed of him when he was engaged in works of beneficent activity? Then he was rather chasing away diseases and pains altogether, than himself undertaking them.\*

An explanation, which has found favor with many, has been suggested by those words which we have already noticed, that his labors were not ended with the day, but protracted far into the evening,—so that he removed indeed sicknesses from others, but with painfulness to himself, and with the weariness attendant upon labors unseasonably drawn out; and thus may not unfitly be said to have taken those sicknesses on himself.† Olshausen, though in a somewhat more spiritual

\* Some have been tempted to make here λαμβάνειν and βαστάζειν = ἀφαιρεῖν. (So Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, l. 3, c. 17: abstulit.) But this plainly will not suit with the original, where Messias is described not as the physician of, but the sufferer for, men: or at least only the first through being the second.

† So Woltzogen, whom, despite his Socinian tendencies, here Witsins (*Meletem. Leidens.*, p. 492.) quotes with approbation: Adeo ut locus hic prophetæ bis fuerit adimpletus; semel cum Christus corporis morbos abstulit ab hominibus non sine summâ molestiâ ac defatigatione, dum ad vesperam usque circa ægrorum curationem occupatus, quodammodo ipsas hominum agritudines in se recipiebat. . . . Alterâ vice, cùm suis perpressionibus ac morte spiritualiter morbos nostrorum peccatorum à nobis sustulit. Cf. Grotius in loc. Theophylact had led the way to this explanation, finding an emphasis in the fact that the sick were brought to Jesus in the evening, out of



manner, gives the same explanation. He says, the obscurity of the passage only disappears when we learn to think more *really* of the healing activity of Christ, as an actual outstreaming and outbreaking of the fulness of his inner life. As therefore physical exertion physically wearied him, (John iv. 6,) so did spiritual activity long drawn out spiritually exhaust him, and this exhaustion, as all other forms of suffering, he underwent for our sakes. A statement questionable in its doctrine: moreover, I cannot believe that the Evangelist meant to lay any such stress upon the unusual or prolonged labors of this day, or that he would not as willingly have quoted these words in relating any other cure or cures which the Lord performed. Not this day only, even had it been a day of especial weariness, but every day of his earthly life was a coming under, upon his part, of the evils which he removed from others. For that which is the law of all true helping, namely, that the burden which you would lift, you must yourself stoop to and come under, (Gal. vi. 2,) the grief which you would console, you must yourself feel with,—a law which we witness to as often as we use the words “sympathy” and “compassion,”—was, of course, eminently true in him upon whom the help of all was laid.\* Not in this single aspect of his life, namely, that he was a healer of sicknesses, were these words of the prophet fulfilled, but rather in the life itself, which brought him in contact with these sicknesses and these discords of man's inner being, every one of which as a real consequence of sin, and as being at every moment contemplated by him as such, did press with a living pang into the holy soul of the Lord. Not so much the healing of these sicknesses was Christ's bearing of them; but his burden was that there were these sicknesses to heal. He “*bore*” them, inasmuch as he bore the mortal suffering life, in which alone he could bring them to an end, and at length swallow up death in victory.

season, (*παρὰ καιρὸν*), though he does not bring that circumstance into connection with these words of Isaiah.

\* Hilary (in loc.): *Passione corporis sui infirmitates humanæ imbecillitatis absorbens*. In SCHOETTGEN'S *Hor. Heb.*, (in loc.) there is a remarkable quotation to the same effect from the book Sohar.

## XIV.

### THE RAISING OF THE WIDOW'S SON.

LUKE vii. 11—16.

THE city whither our Lord was bound, and at the gate of which this great miracle was wrought, is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. It lay upon the southern border of Galilee, and on the road to Jerusalem, whither our Lord was probably now going to keep the second passover of his open ministry. That our Lord should meet the funeral at the gate of the city, while it belonged no doubt to the wonder-works of God's grace, while it was one of those marvellous coincidences which, seeming accidental, are yet deep laid in the councils of his wisdom and of his love, is at the same time a natural circumstance, to be explained by the fact that the Jews did not suffer the interring of the dead in towns, but had their burial-places without the walls. Probably there was very much in the circumstances of the sad procession which he now met, to arouse the compassion even of them who were not touched with so lively a feeling for human sorrows as was the compassionate Saviour of men; and it was this which had brought that "*much people*" to accompany the bier. Indeed, there could little be added to the words of the Evangelist, whose whole narrative here, apart from its deeper interest, is a master-work for its perfect beauty—there could be little added to it to make the picture of desolation more complete—" *There was a dead man carried out,\* the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.*" The bitterness of the mourning for an only son had passed into a proverb; thus, Jer. vi. 26, "Make thee mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentations;" and Zech. xii. 10, "They shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son;" "Amos viii. 10, "I will make it as the mourning of an only son."

\* 'Εξεκομίζετο. The technical word is *εκψέρειν*, and the carrying out, *εκφορά*.

“*And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.*” How different this “*Weep not,*” from the “*Weep not*” which often proceeds from the lips of earthly comforters, who, even while they speak the words, give no reason why the mourner should cease from weeping; but he that is come that he may one day make good that word, “*God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain,*” (Rev. xxi. 4,) does show now some effectual glimpses of his power, wiping away, though not yet for ever, the tears from the weeping eyes of that desolate mother. Yet, as Olshausen has observed, it would be an error to suppose that compassion for the mother was the *determining* motive for this mighty spiritual act on the part of Christ: for, in that case, had the joy of the mother been the only object which he had in view, the young man who was raised would have been used merely as a *means*, which yet no man can ever be. That joy of the mother was indeed the nearest consequence of the act, but not the final cause;—*that*, though at present hidden, was, no doubt, the spiritual awakening of the young man for a higher life, through which, indeed, alone the joy of the mother became a true and an abiding joy.

The drawing nigh and touching the bier was meant as an intimation to the bearers that they should arrest their steps, and one which they understood, for immediately “*they that bare him stood still.*” Then follows the word of power, and spoken, as ever, in his own name, “*Young man, I say unto thee, Arise;*”—I, that am the Resurrection and the Life, quickening “*the dead, and calling those things which be not, as though they were.*” And that word was heard, for “*he that was dead sat up, and began to speak.*” Christ rouses from the bier as easily as another would rouse from the bed,\*—different in this even from his own messengers and ministers in the Old Covenant; for they, not without an effort, not without a long and earnest wrestling with God, won back its prey from the jaws of death; and this, because there dwelt not the *fulness* of power in them, who were but as servants in the house of another, not as a son in his own house.†

\* Augustine (*Serm.* 98, c. 2): *Nemo tam facilè excitat in lecto, quàm facil Christus in sepulcro.*

† See what has been said already, p. 33. Thus too Massillon, in a sermon *Sur la Divinité de Jésus-Christ*, has these eloquent remarks: *Elie ressuscite des morts, il est vrai; mais il est obligé de se coucher plusieurs fois sur le corps de l'enfant qu'il ressuscite: il souffle, il se retrécit, il s'agit: on voit bien qu'il invoque une puissance étrangère: qu'il rappelle de l'empire de la mort une ame qui n'est pas soumise à sa voix: et qu'il n'est par lui-même le maître de la mort et de la vie. Jésus-Christ ressuscite les morts*

“*And he delivered him to his mother.*” (Cf. 1 Kin. xvii. 23; 2 Kin. iv. 36.) He who did all this, shall once, when he has spoken the great “*Arise,*” which shall awaken not one, but all the dead, deliver all the divided, that have fallen asleep in him, to their beloved for personal recognition and for a special fellowship of joy, amid the universal gladness and communion of love which shall then fill all hearts. We have the promise and pledge of this in the three raisings from the dead which prefigure that coming resurrection. The effects of this miracle on those present were for good; “*There came a fear on all,*” a holy fear, a sense that they were standing in the presence of some great one; “*and they glorified God,*”—praised him for his mercy in remembering and visiting his people Israel,—“*saying that a great prophet is risen up among us.*”—They concluded that no ordinary prophet was among them, but a “*great*” one, since none but the very greatest prophets of the olden times, an Elijah or an Elisha, had brought the dead to life. In their other exclamation, “*God hath visited his people,*” lay no less an allusion to the long periods during which they had been without a prophet, so that it might have seemed, and many might have almost feared, that the last of these had arrived.\*

comme il fait les actions les plus communes; il parle en maître à ceux qui dorment d'un sommeil éternel; et l'on sent bien qu'il est le Dieu des morts comme des vivans, jamais plus tranquille que lorsqu'il opère les plus grandes choses.

\* Philostratus (*Vita Apollonii*, l. 4, c. 45), relates a miracle as performed by Apollonius, which is evidently framed in imitation and rivalry of this. (See what has been said on this rivalry, p. 56, and in BURK'S *Apollonius und Christus*, p. 40.) Apollonius met one day in the streets of Rome a damsel carried out to burial, followed by him to whom she was espoused, and a weeping company. He bade them set down the bier, saying that he would stanch their tears, and having inquired her name, whispered something in her ear, and then taking her by the hand, he raised her up, and she began straightway to speak, and returned to her father's house. Yet Philostratus does not relate this as probably having been more than an awakening from the deep swoon of an apparent death, (*ἀφύπνισε τὴν κόρην τοῦ δοκούντος θανάτου*), and suggests an explanation that reminds one of the modern ones of Paulus and his school,—that Apollonius perceived in her a spark of life which had escaped the notice of her physicians and attendants; but whether it was this, or that he did really kindle in her anew the spark of an extinguished life, he acknowledges it impossible for him, even as it was for the bystanders, to say.

## XV.

### THE HEALING OF THE IMPOTENT MAN AT BETHESDA.

John v. 1—16.

ONE who is perhaps the ablest among the commentators of the Romish communion begins his observations on this act of healing with the expression of his hearty wish that the sacred historian had added a single word to his narrative, and told us *at what* “*feast of the Jews*” it was wrought.\* Certainly an infinite amount of learned discussion would so have been saved ; for this question has been greatly debated, not merely for its own sake, but because of the important bearing which it has upon the whole chronology of St. John’s Gospel, and therefore of our Lord’s life ; for if we cannot determine the duration of his actual ministry from the helps which are supplied by this Gospel, we shall seek in vain to do it from the others. If it can be proved that this “*feast of the Jews*” was the feast of the Passover, then St. John makes mention of four distinct Passovers, three besides this present, ii. 13 ; vi. 4 ; and the last ; and we shall get to the three years and a half, the half of a week of years for the length of Christ’s ministry, which many, with just reason, as it seems, have thought they found intimated and designated beforehand for it in the prophecies of Daniel (ix. 27). But if this feast be that of Pentecost, or, as in later times many have been inclined to accept it, the feast of Purim, then the view drawn from the prophecy of Daniel, of the duration of Christ’s ministry, however likely in itself, will yet derive no proof or confirmation from dates supplied by St. John ; nor will it be

\* Maldonatus, who seems almost inclined to fall out with St. John that he has not done so: Magnâ nos Joannes molestiâ contentioneque liberâsset, si vel unum adjecisset verbum, quo quis ille Judæorum dies fuisset festus declarâsset.

possible to make out from him, with any certainty, a period of more than between two and three years from our Lord's baptism to his death.

And first with regard to the history of the passage, we have no older view than that of Irenæus. Replying to the Gnostics, who pressed the words of Isaiah, "the acceptable *year* of the Lord," to make them mean literally that our Lord's ministry lasted but a single year, he enumerates the Passovers of our Lord's life, and expressly includes this.\* Origen however and the Alexandrians, who held with the Gnostics that our Lord's ministry lasted but a single year, resting upon the same phrase, "the *year* of the Lord," did not, as indeed consistently they could not, agree with Irenæus; nor did the Greek Church generally; Chrysostom, Cyril, Theophylact, take it for the feast of Pentecost. At a later period, however, Theodoret, wishing to confirm his view of the half week in Daniel, refers to St. John in proof that the Lord's ministry lasted for three years and a half,† implying that for him this feast was a Passover. This, too, was the view of Luther, Calvin, and it derived additional support from Scaliger's adherence to it; and were the question only between it and the feast of Pentecost, the point would have been settled long ago, as now on all sides the latter is given up.

But in modern times another scheme has been started, which at present divides the voices of interpreters, and has not a few in its favor, namely, that this feast is a feast of Purim; that namely which went immediately before the *second* Passover of our Lord's ministry,‡ for such in that case would be the one named John vi. 4. But the view of Irenæus that this present "*feast of the Jews*" is itself a Passover, and the second—that other consequently the third—though not unencumbered with difficulties, yet is not, I think, to be exchanged for this newer theory. It is perplexing, as must be admitted, to find another Passover occurring so very soon (vi. 4). Nor may we press the argument, that St. John making mention of "*the feast*" without further addition, means always the chief feast, the Passover; for the examples adduced do not bear this out: he does indeed use this language, yet always with allusion

\* *Con. Har.*, l. 2, c. 22: *Secundâ vice ascendit in diem festum Paschæ in Hierusalem, quando paralyticum qui juxta natatoriam jacebat xxxviii annos curavit.*

† *Comm. in Dan.* (in loc.)

‡ This view was first suggested by Kepler. Hug has done every thing for it that could be done to make it plausible; and among the valuable later German commentators on St. John, Tholuck and Olshausen are decidedly, and Lücke somewhat doubtfully, adherents to this opinion. So, too, Neander, (*Leben Jesu.*, p. 430.) and Jacobi in the *Theol. Stud. u. Krit.*, v. 11, p. 861, seq. Both he and Lücke enter very thoroughly into the question. Hengstenberg (*Christologie*, v. 2, p. 561.) earnestly opposes it and maintains the earlier, as does Paulus.

to some mention of the feast made shortly before.\* But the argument which mainly prevails with me is this—the Evangelist clearly connects the Lord's coming to Jerusalem with the keeping of this feast; it was to celebrate the feast he came. But there was nothing in the feast of Purim to draw him thither. It was no religious feast at all; but only a popular; of human, not of divine institution. There was no temple service pertaining to it; but men kept it at their own houses. And though naturally it would have been celebrated at Jerusalem with more pomp and circumstance than any where besides, yet there was nothing in its feasting and its rioting, its intemperance and excess, which would have made our Lord particularly desirous to sanction it with his presence. As far as Mordecai and Esther and the deliverance wrought in their days stand below Moses and Aaron and Miriam and the glorious redemption from Egypt, so in true worth, in dignity, in religious significance, stood the feast of Purim below the feast of the Passover; however a carnal generation may have been inclined to exaggerate the importance of that, in the past events and actual celebration of which, there was so much to flatter the carnal mind. There is an extreme improbability in the hypothesis that it was this which attracted our Lord to Jerusalem; and these considerations strongly prevail with me to believe that the earlier view is the most accurate, and that this feast which our blessed Lord adorned with his presence and signalized with this great miracle, is “*the feast*,” that feast which is the mother of all the rest, the Passover.

The scene of this miracle was the immediate neighborhood † of the pool of Bethesda. ‡ It has been common for many centuries to point

\* Moreover, the article before *ἐορτῆ* should most likely find no place. Our translators have not recognized it.

† It was wrought *ἐπὶ τῆ προβατικῆ*, which should be completed, not as we have done it with *ἀγορᾶ*, but with *πόλῃ* (see Neh. iii. 1; xii. 39, LXX., *πόλη προβατικῆ*;) and translated “by the sheep *gate*,” rather than “by the sheep *market*.” The transcribers were unacquainted with the localities of Jerusalem, and the construction of the passage was not very clear, and thus a considerable number of variations have crept in; but the commonly received reading has been adopted as the best founded by all later critics. *Κολυμβήθρα* = *natoria*, (cf. John ix. 7,) from *κολυμβάω*, to dive, or swim. We meet the word Eccles. ii. 6, LXX., for the reservoir of a garden. It is used in ecclesiastical language alike for the building in which baptisms are performed (the *baptistry*), and the font which contains the water. (See *SUTCLIFF'S Thes.*, s. vv. *βαπτιστήριον* and *κολυμβήθρα*.)

‡ *Βηθεσδά* = *domus misericordiæ*. This word also, which was strange to the transcribers, has been written in many ways. Some have appealed, as Bengel, for instance, to this passage, as important for fixing the date when this Gospel was written, as proving, at least, that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet in truth it

out the large excavation near the gate now called St. Stephen's gate, as the ancient Bethesda.\* It is true that its immense depth, seventy-five feet, had perplexed many; yet the incurious ease which has misnamed so much in the Holy Land and in Jerusalem, had remained without being seriously challenged, until Robinson, our latest, as in the main our best, authority on all such matters, among the many traditions which he has disturbed, affirms that "there is not the slightest evidence which can identify it with the Bethesda of the New Testament."† Nor does the tradition which identifies them ascend higher, as he can discover, than the thirteenth century. He sees in that rather the remains of the ancient fosse which protected on the north side the citadel Antonia; and the true Bethesda he thinks he finds, though on this he speaks not with any certainty, in that which goes now by the name of the Fountain of the Virgin, being the upper fountain of Siloam.‡

In the porches round "*lay a great multitude of impotent folk, blind, halt, and withered;*" the words which complete this verse, "*waiting for the moving of the water;*" lie under strong suspicion, as the verse follow-

does not prove any thing. St. John might still have said, "There *is* at Jerusalem a pool," while that had remained, surviving the destruction; or might have written with that vivid recalling of the past, which caused him to speak of it as existing yet. The various reading *ἦν* for *ἔστι* is no doubt to be traced to transcribers, who being rightly persuaded that this Gospel was composed after the destruction of the city, thought that St. John could not have otherwise written.

\* Röhr, in his *Palestina*, p. 66, does so without a misgiving.

† *Biblical Researches*, v. 1, p. 489, seq.

‡ He was himself witness of that remarkable phenomenon, so often mentioned of old, as by Jerome (*In Isai.* viii.): Siloe . . . qui non jugibus aquis, sed in certis horis diebusque ebulliat; et per terrarum concava et antra saxi durissimi cum magno sonitu veniat;—but which had of late fallen quite into discredit,—of the waters rapidly bubbling up, and rising with a gurgling sound in the basin of this fountain, and in a few minutes retreating again. When he was present they rose nearly or quite a foot. (*Researches*, v. 1, pp. 506—508.) Prudentius, whom he does not quote, has anticipated the view that this Siloam is Bethesda, and that in this phenomenon is "*the troubling of the water;*" however the healing virtue may have departed.

Variis Siloā refundit

Momentis latices, nec fluctum semper anhelat,  
Sed vice distincta largos lacus accipit haustus.  
Agmina languentum sitiunt spem fontis avari,  
Membrorum maculas puro ablutura natatu;  
Certatim interea roranti punice rancas  
Expectant scatebras, et siccio margine pendent.

Perhaps it is not a slip of memory, but his belief in the identity of Siloam and Bethesda, which makes Irenæus (*Con. Her.*, l. 4, c. 8.) to say of our Lord: Et Siloam etiam sæpe Sabbatis curavit; et propter hoc assidebant ei multi die Sabbatorum.



ing has undoubtedly no right to a place in the text. That fourth verse the most important Greek and Latin copies are alike without, and most of the early versions. In other MSS. which retain this verse, the obelus which hints suspicion, or the asterisk which marks rejection, is attached to it;\* while those in which it appears unquestioned belong mostly, as Griesbach shows, to a later recension of the text. And this fourth verse spreads the suspicion of its own spuriousness over the last clause of the verse preceding, which, though it has not so great a body of evidence against it, has yet, in a less degree, the same marks of suspicion about it. Doubtless whatever here is addition, whether only the fourth verse, or the last clause also of the third, found very early its way into the text; we have it as early as Tertullian,—the first witness for its presence.† The baptismal angel, a favorite thought with him, was here foreshowed and typified; as, somewhat later, Ambrose ‡ saw a prophecy of the descent of the Holy Ghost, consecrating the waters of baptism to the mystical washing away of sin; and Chrysostom and others make frequent use of this verse.§ At first probably a marginal note, expressing the popular notion of the Jewish Christians concerning the origin of the healing power which from time to time the water possessed, by degrees it assumed the shape in which now we have it: for there are marks of growth about it, betraying themselves in a great variety of readings,—some copies omitting one part, and some another of the verse—all

\* In Jerome's phrase, though not used with reference to this verse, *Veru jugulante confossum est*.

† *De Bapt.*, c. 5: *Angelum aquis intervenire, si novum videtur, exemplum futurum præcurrit. Piscinam Bethsaida angelus interveniens commovebat; observabant qui valetudinem querebantur. Nam si quis prævenerat descendere illuc, queri post lavacrum desinebat. Figura ista medicinæ corporalis spiritalem medicinam canebat, eâ formâ quâ semper carnalia in figurâ spiritualium antecedunt. Proficiente itaque hominibus gratiâ Dei plus aquis et angelo accessit: qui vitia corporis remediabant, nunc spiritum medentur: qui temporalem operabantur salutem, nunc æternam reformant: qui unum semel anno liberabant, nunc quotidie populos conservant.* It will be observed that he calls it above, the pool *Bethsaida*; this is not by accident, for it recurs (*Adv. Jud.*, c. 13), in Augustine, and is still in the Vulgate.

‡ *De Spir. Sanct.*, l. 1, c. 7: *Quid in hoc typo Angelus nisi discensionem Sancti Spiritûs nuntiabat, quæ nostris futura temporibus, aquas sacerdotalibus invocata precibus consecraret?* and *De Myst.*, c. 4: *Illis Angelus descendebat, tibi Spiritus Sanctus illis creatura movebatur, tibi Christus operator ipse Dominus creaturæ.*

§ Thus he says (*In Joh.*, *Hom.* 36): "As there it was not simply the nature of the waters which healed, for then they would have always done so, but when was added the energy of the angel; so with us, it is not simply the water which works, but when it has received the grace of the Spirit, then it washes away all sins."

which is generally the sign of a later addition: thus, little by little, if procured admission into the text, probably at Alexandria first, the birth-place of other similar additions. There is nothing in the statement itself which might not have found place in St. John. It rests upon that religious view of nature, which in all nature sees something beyond nature, which does not believe that it has discovered causes, when, in fact, it has only traced the sequence of phenomena, and which in all recognizes a going forth of the immediate power of God, invisible agencies of his, whether personal or otherwise, accomplishing his will.\*

\* Hammond's explanation of this phenomenon, which seems like a leaf borrowed from Dr. Paulus, is very singular, both in itself, and as coming from him. It very early awoke earnest remonstrances on many sides,—see for instance Witsius, in *WOLF'S Cura* (in loc.) The medicinal virtues of this pool he supposes were derived from the washing in it the carcasses and entrails of the beasts slain for sacrifices. In proof that they were here washed, he quotes Brocardus, a monk of the thirteenth century! whose authority would be nothing, and whose words are these: *Intransibus porrò portam Gregis ad sinistram occurrit piscina probatica, in quâ Nathinæi lavabant hostias quas tradebant sacerdotibus in Templo offerendas*: that is, as every one must confess, washed their fleeces before delivering them *to be* offered by the priests. Some in later times have amended this part of the theory, who, knowing that the sacrifices were washed *in* the temple and not without it, have supposed that the blood and other animal matter was drained off by conduits into this pool. But to proceed,—the pool, he says, possessed these healing powers only at intervals, because only at their great feasts, and eminently at their Passover, was there slain any such great multitude of beasts as could tinge and warm those waters, and for the time make them a sort of animal bath. The *ἄγγελος* is not an angel, but a *messenger* or servant sent down by those who were skilled in the matter to stir the waters, that the grosser and thicker particles, in which the chief medicinal virtue resided, but which as heaviest would have sunk to the bottom, might re-infuse themselves in the waters. The fact that only one each time was healed he explains, that probably the pool was purposely of very limited dimensions, for the concentrating of its virtues, thus giving room for no more than one at a time: and thus by evaporation or otherwise its strength was exhausted before place could be made for another. He has here worked out at length a theory which Theophylact makes mention of, although there is no appearance that he himself accepted it, as Hammond affirms. His words are: *Εἶχον δὲ οἱ πολλοὶ ὑπόληψιν, ὅτι καὶ ἀπὸ μόνου τοῦ πλύνεσθαι τὰ ἐντόπια τῶν ἱεραίων ἴσχυεν τινὰ λαμβάνει θεύτερον τὸ ἴδιον*. And after all it seems more than doubtful whether he does not mean that some thought this grace was given to the waters because they were used for washing the altar sacrifices; and not that it was naturally imparted through that washing. Certainly what follows in his exposition seems very nearly to prove this. This explanation has found favor with one, a physician I should imagine, RICHTEK, *De Balneo Animalis*, p. 107, quoted by Winer, *Real Hörterbuch*, s. v. Bethesda, whose words are these: *Non miror fontem tantâ adhuc virtute animalis hostiarum calentem, quippe in proxima loca temperivè effusum, ut pro pleniori partium miscelâ turbatum triplici maxime infirmorum classis, quorum luculenter genus nervosum laborabat, profuisse; et quia animalis hæc virtus citò cum calore aufugit, et vappam inertem, immo putrem relinquit, iis tantum qui primi ingressi sunt, salutem attulisse*.

From among the multitude that are waiting here, Christ singles out one on whom he will show his power;—one only, for he came not now to be the healer of men's bodies, save only as he could link on to this healing the truer healing of their souls and spirits. One construction of the fifth verse would make the poor cripple, the present object of his healing love, to have been actually waiting at the edge of that pool for the "*thirty and eight years*"\* which are named; while according to another construction, the thirty-eight years express the age of the man. Neither is right, but rather that which our version gives. The eight and thirty years are the duration, not of his life, but of his malady,—while yet it is not implied that he had been expecting his healing from that pool for all that time; though, from his own words, we infer that he had there been waiting for it long. The question, "*Wilt thou be made whole?*" at first might seem superfluous; for who would not be made whole if he might? and the very presence of this man at the place of healing witnessed for his desire. But the question has its purpose. This impotent man probably had waited so long, and so long waited in vain, that hope was dead or well-nigh dead within him, and the question is asked to awaken in him anew a yearning after the benefit, which the Saviour, compassionating his hopeless case, was about to impart. His heart may have been withered through his long sufferings and the long neglects of his fellow-men; it was something to persuade him that this stranger pitied him, was interested in his case, would help him if he could. So persuading him to believe in his love, he prepared him to believe also in his might. Our Lord was giving him now the faith, which presently he was about to demand of him.

In the man's answer there is not a direct reply to the question, but an explanation why he yet continued in his infirmity. "Right gladly, Sir," he would say, "only *I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool.*" The virtues of the water disappeared so fast, they were so preoccupied, whether from the narrowness of the spot, or from some cause which we know not, by the first comer, that he who through his own infirmity and the lack of all friendly help could never be this first, missed always the blessing; "*While I am coming, another steppeth down before me.*" But the long and weary years of baffled expectation are at length ended: "*Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk,*" and the man believed that power went forth with that

\* These thirty and eight years of the man's punishment answering so exactly to the thirty-eight years of Israel's punishment in the wilderness have not unnaturally led many, old and new, (see HENGSTENBERG, *Christol.*, v. 2, p. 568,) to find in this man a type of Israel after the flesh.

word, and making proof, he found that it was even so: "*immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.*" It is different with him from that other impotent man. (Acts iii. 2.) He, when he was healed, walked and leaped and praised God. (ver. 8.) His infirmity was no chastisement of an especial sin, for he had been "lame from his mother's womb." But this man shall carry his bed, a present memento of his past sin.

But "*the Jews,*" not here the multitude, but some among the spiritual heads of the nation, whom it is very noticeable that St. John continually characterizes by this name, (i. 19; vii. 1; ix. 22; xviii. 12, 14;) find fault with the man for carrying his bed in obedience to Christ's command, their reason being because "*the same day*" on which the miracle was accomplished "*was the Sabbath;*" and the carrying of any burden was one of the expressly prohibited works of that day. Here, indeed, they had apparently an Old Testament ground to go upon, and an interpretation of the Mosaic Law from the lips of a prophet, to justify their interference, and the offence which they took. But the man's bearing of his bed was not a work by itself; it was merely the corollary, or indeed the concluding act, of his healing, that by which he should make proof himself, and give testimony to others of its reality. It was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day; it was lawful then to do that which was immediately involved in and directly followed on the healing. And here lay ultimately the true controversy between Christ and his adversaries, namely, whether it was most lawful to do good on that day, or to leave it undone. (Luke vi. 9.) Starting from the unlawfulness of leaving good undone, he asserted that he was its true keeper, keeping it as God kept it, with the highest beneficent activity, which in his Father's case, as in his own, was identical with deepest rest,—and not, as they accused him of being, its breaker. It was because he had himself "*done those things,*" (see ver. 16,) that the Jews persecuted him, and not forbidding the man to bear his bed, which was a mere accident and consequence involved in what he himself had wrought.\* This, however, first attracted their notice; whereupon they "*said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.*" Already the pharisaical Jews, starting from passages such as Exod. xxiii. 12; xxxi. 13—17; xxxv. 2, 3; Num. xv. 32—36; Nehem. xiii. 15—22, had laid down such a multitude of prohibitions, and drawn so infinite a number of hair-splitting distinctions, as we shall have occasion to see, Luke xiii. 15, 16, that a plain and unlearned man could hardly come to

\* Calvin: Non suum modò factum excusat, sed ejus etiam qui grabbatum suum tulit. Erat enim appendix et quasi pars miraculi, quia nihil quàm ejus approbatio erat.

know what was forbidden, and what was permitted. This poor man concerned himself not with these subtle casuistries. He only knew that the man with power to make him whole, the man who had shown compassion to him, had bid him do what he was doing, and he is satisfied with this authority: "*He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk.*"\* Surely a good model of an answer, when the world finds fault and is scandalized with what the Christian is doing, contrary to its works and ways, and to the rules which it has laid down!

For this man, the greater offender, they inquire now, as being the juster object of censure and of punishment: *Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk?*" The malignity of the questioners, coming out as it does in the very shape in which they put their question, is worthy of note. They do not take up the poor man's words on their most favorable side, and that which plainly would have been the more natural; they do not say, "What man is he that made thee whole?" but, probably, themselves knowing perfectly well, or at least guessing, who his Healer was, yet wishing to undermine any influence which he may have obtained over this simple man,—an influence already perceptible in his finding the authority of Jesus sufficient to justify him in his own eyes for transgressing their commandment,—they insinuate by the form of the question that the man could not be from God, who gave a command at which they, the interpreters of God's law, were so greatly aggrieved and offended.†

But the man could not point out his benefactor, for he had already withdrawn: "*Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.*" Many say, as Grotius for instance, because he would avoid ostentation and the applauses of the people: but "*a multitude being in that place*" may be only mentioned to explain the facility with which he withdrew: he mingled with and passed through the crowd, and so was lost from sight in an instant. Were it not that the common people usually took our Lord's part in cases like the present, one might imagine that a menacing crowd under the influence of these chiefs of the Jews had gathered together while this conversation was going forward betwixt the healed cripple and themselves, from the violence of whom the Lord withdrew himself, his hour being not yet come.

Though we cannot of course draw any conclusion from the circum-

\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh., Tract. 17*): Non acciperem jussionem à quo receperam sanitatem?

† Grotius: En malitiæ ingenium! non dicunt, Quis est qui te sanavit? sed, Quis jussit grabatum tollere? Quærunt non quod mirentur, sed quod calumnientur.

stance, yet it is a sign of good augury that "*Jesus findeth him in the temple,*" rather than any where else. It is as though he was there returning thanks for the great mercy which had been so lately vouchsafed him. (Cf. Isai. xxxviii. 22; Acts iii. 8.) And now our Lord, whose purpose it ever was to build upon the healing of the body the better healing of the soul, suffers not this matter to conclude without a word of solemn warning, a word which showed that all the past life of the sufferer lay open and manifest before him; even things done more than thirty-eight years ago, before, that is, his own earthly life had commenced: "*Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee*"—a worse thing than those thirty and eight years of pain and infirmity! words which give us an awful glimpse of the severity of God's judgments. This infirmity had found him a youth and left him an old man; it had withered up all his manhood, and yet "*a worse thing*" even than this is threatened him, should he sin again.\*

What the past sin of this sufferer had been, to which the Lord alludes, we know not, but the man himself knew very well; his conscience was the interpreter of the warning. This much, however, is plain to us; that Christ did connect the man's suffering with his individual sin; for however he rebuked man's uncharitable way of tracing such a connection, or the scheme of a Theodice, which should in every case affirm a man's personal suffering to be in proportion to his personal guilt, a scheme which all experience refutes, much judgment being deferred and awaiting the great day when all things shall be set on the square; yet he meant not thereby to deny that much, very much of judgment is even now continually proceeding. However unwilling men may be to receive this, bringing as it does God so near, and making retribution so real and so prompt a thing, yet is it true not the less. As some eagle pierced with a shaft feathered from its own wing, so many a sufferer, even in this present time, sees and cannot deny that it was his own sin that fledged the arrow of God's judgment, which has pierced him and brought him down. And lest he should miss the connection, oftentimes he is punished, it may be himself sinned against by his fellow-man, in the very kind in which he himself has sinned against others. The deceiver is deceived, as Jacob; the violator of the sanctities of family life is himself wounded in his tenderest and dearest relations, as

\* Calvin: Si nihil ferulis proficiat erga nos Deus, quibus leniter nos tanquam teneros ac delicatos filios humanissimus pater castigat, novam personam et quasi alienam induere cogitur. Flagella ergo ad domandum nostram ferociam accipit . . . . Quare non mirum est si atrocioribus pœnis quasi malleis conterat Deus, quibus mediocris pœna nihil prodest: frangi enim æquum est, qui corrigi non sustinent.

was David. And many a sinner, who cannot read his own doom, for it is a final and a fatal one, yet declares in that doom to others that there is indeed a coming back upon men of their sins: the grandson of Ahab is himself treacherously slain in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite; (2 Kin. ix. 23;) William Rufus perishes, himself the third of his family, in the New Forest, the scene of the sacrilege and the crimes of his race.\*

But to return; "*The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.*" Whom he did not recognize in the crowd, he has recognized in the temple. This is Augustine's remark, who builds on it many valuable observations upon the inner calm and solitude of spirit in which alone we shall recognize the Lord.† Yet while these remarks may stand in themselves, they scarcely find place here. The man probably learned from the bystanders the name of his deliverer, and went and told it,—scarcely, as some assume, in treachery, or to augment the envy which was already existing against him, at least there is not a trace of this in the narrative itself,—but gratefully proclaiming aloud and to the rulers of his nation the physician who had healed him.‡ He expected, probably, in the simplicity of his heart, that the name of him, whose reputation, if not his person, he had already known, whom so many counted as a prophet, if not as the Messiah himself, would have been sufficient to stop the mouths of the gainsayers. Had it been in a baser spirit that he went, as Chrysostom ingeniously observes, he would not have gone and told them "*that it was Jesus which had made him whole,*" but rather that it was Jesus who had bidden him to carry his bed.

His word, however, profited nothing. The Jews were only provoked the more; for so is it ever with the revelation of the divine: what it does not draw to itself it drives *from* itself; what it does not win to obedience it arrays in active hostility. They are now more bitterly incensed against the Lord, not merely because he had encouraged this man to break, but had in that act of healing himself

\* Tragedy in its highest form continually occupies itself with this truth—nowhere, perhaps, so greatly as in the awful *reproduction* in the Choephore of the scene in which Clytemnestra stood over the prostrate bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra—a reproduction *with only the difference* that now it is she and her paramour that are the slain, and her own son that stands over *her*.

† *In Ev. Joh., Tract. 17*: Difficile est in turbâ videre Christum. . . Turba strepitum habet; visio ista secretum desiderat. . . In turbâ non eum vidit, in templo vidit.

‡ Calvin: Nihil minus in animo habuit quàm conflare Christo invidiam; nihil enim minus speravit quàm ut tantopere furerent adversus Christum. Pius ergo affectus fuit, quum vellet justo ac debito honore medicum suum prosequi.

broken, the Sabbath,—set at nought, that is, their tradition about it. In his reply he seeks to lift up the cavillers to the true standing point from which to complete the Sabbath, and his relation to it as the only-begotten of the Father. He is no more a breaker of the Sabbath than God is, when he upholds with an energy that knows no pause the work of his creation from hour to hour, and from moment to moment: “*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;*” my work is but the reflex of his work. Abstinence from an outward work belongs not to the idea of a Sabbath, it is only more or less the necessary condition of it for being so framed and constituted as ever to be in danger of losing the true collection and rest of the spirit in the multiplicity of earthly toil and business. Man indeed must cease from *his* work, if a higher work is to find place in him. He scatters himself in his work, and therefore must collect himself anew, and have seasons for so doing. But with him who is one with the Father it is otherwise. In him the deepest rest is not excluded by the highest activity; nay rather, in God, in the Son as in the Father, they are one and the same.\*

This defence of what he has done only exasperates his adversaries the more. They have here not a Sabbath-breaker only, but also a blasphemer, one who, as they well perceive, however some later may have refused to see it,† is putting himself on an equality with God, is claiming divine attributes for himself; and they now not merely persecute, but seek to slay him.‡ Hereupon follows a discourse than which there is no weightier in Holy Scripture, for the fast fixing of the doctrine concerning the relations of the Father and the Son. Other passages may

\* Thus Augustine on the eternal Sabbath-keeping of the faithful (*Ep.* 55, c. 9): *Inest autem in illâ requie non desidiosa segnitia, sed quædam ineffabilis tranquillitas actionis otiosæ. Sic enim ab hujus vitæ operibus in fine requiescitur, ut in alterius vitæ actione gaudeatur.*

† Augustine (*In Ev. Joh., Tract.* 17): *Ecce intelligunt Judæi, quod non intelligunt Ariani.*

‡ The words *καὶ ἐξήρουν αὐτὸν ἀποκτείνειν* (ver. 16,) are probably transferred from this ver. 18, where they are in their fit place: but there they anticipate the later despite of the Jews, and are omitted by many important authorities.—It is an interesting question whether the “one work” which our Lord says that he had done, and they all marvelled (*John* vii. 21), or, all were disturbed (*θαυμάζετε*, as Euthymius says rightly here, = *θαυμβέσθε, θαυμάστε*) be an allusion to the healing of this impotent man, as it is evidently to a Sabbath-day cure. Most interpreters answer in the affirmative without any doubt. Yet it certainly seems unlikely that the Jews should again have brought up the old accusation concerning a work of healing wrought on a prior visit to Jerusalem, and ver. 31 shows that he had wrought *many* miracles there. It is then, I think, most likely that not this miracle, but some new Sabbath cure not recorded, but only thus alluded to, had thus anew awakened their contradiction and enmity.



be as important in regard of the Arian, other again in regard of the Sabellian, declension from the truth; but this upon both sides plants the pillars of the faith; yet it would lead too far from the purpose of this volume to enter on it here.

The subject, however, would not be complete without some further reference to the types and prophetic symbols which many have traced in this history. It has been needful indeed in part to anticipate this matter. We have seen how, of old, men saw in these beneficent influences of the pool of Bethesda a foreshowing and foreshadowing of future benefits, and especially, as was natural, of the benefit of baptism; and, through familiarity with a miracle of a lower order, a helping of men's faith to the receiving the weightier mystery of a yet higher healing which was to be linked with water.\* They were well pleased also often to magnify the largeness and freedom of the present benefit, by comparing it with the narrower and more stinted blessings of the old dispensation, blessings which, they say,† altogether ceased at the death of Christ, with the coming in, that is, and establishing of the new. The pool with its one healed, and that one at distant intervals,—once a year Theophylact and most others assumed, although nothing of the kind is said, and the word of the original may mean oftener or seldomer,—was the type of the weaker and more restrained graces of the Old Covenant; when not as yet was there room for all, nor a fountain opened and at all times accessible for the healing of the spiritual sicknesses of the whole race of men, but only of a single people.‡

Thus Chrysostom, in a magnificent Easter sermon,§ whose allusions have a peculiar fitness, the season of Easter being that at which the great multitudes of neophytes were baptized. He says:—"Among the Jews also there was of old a pool of water. Yet learn whereunto it availed, that thou mayest accurately measure the Jewish poverty and our riches. There went down, it is said, an angel and moved the waters, and who first descended into them after the moving, obtained a cure. The Lord of angels went down into the stream of Jordan, and sanctifying the nature of water, healed the whole world. So that there indeed he who descended after the first was not healed, for to the Jews infirm and

\* So especially Chrysostom (in loc.)

† TERTULLIAN, *Adv. Jud.*, c. 13.

‡ The author of the work attributed to Ambrose (*De Sacram.*, l. 2, c. 2): *Tunc inquam temporis in figurâ qui prior descendisset, solus curabatur. Quântò major est gratia Ecclesiæ, in quâ omnes salvantur, quicumque descendunt!*

§ *Opera*, v. 3, p. 756, Bened. Ed.

carual this grace was given; but here after the first a second descends, after the second a third and a fourth; and were it a thousand, didst thou east the whole world into these spiritual fountains, the grace were not worn out, the gift expended, the fountains defiled, the liberality exhausted." And Augustine, ever on the watch to bring out his great truth that the Law was for the revealing of sin, and could not effect its removal, for the making men to know their sickness, not for the healing that sickness, for the dragging them out of the lurking-places of an imagined righteousness, not for the providing them of itself with any surer refuge, finds a type, or at least an apt illustration of this, in those five porches, which *showed* their sick, but could not *cure* them, in which they "*lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, and withered.*" It needed that the waters should be stirred, before any power went forth for their cure. This motion of the pool was the perturbation of the Jewish people at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then powers were stirring for their healing, and he who "*went down,*" he who humbly believed in his Incarnation, in his descent as a man amongst us, who was not offended at his lowly estate, he was healed of whatsoever disease he had.\* Such are the most important uses in this kind that have been made of this history.

\* *Enarr. 1<sup>m</sup> in Ps. lxx. 15*: Meritò lex per Moysen data est, gratia et veritas per Jesum Christum facta est. Moyses quinque libros scripsit; sed in quinque porticibus piscinam eígentibus languidi jacebant, sed curari non poterant . . . Illis enim quinque porticibus, in figurâ quinque librorum, prodebantur potiùs quàm sanabantur ægroti . . . Venit Dominus, turbata est aqua, et crucifixus est, descendat ut sanetur ægrotus. Quid est, descendat? Humiliet se. Ergo quicumque amatis litteram sine gratiâ, in porticibus remanebitis, ægri eritis; jacentes, non convalescentes: de litterâ enim præsumitis. Cf. *Enarr. in Ps. lxxxiii. 7*: Qui non sanabatur Lege, id est porticibus, sanatur gratiâ, per passionis fidem Domini nostri Jesu Christi. Cf. *Serm. 125*: Ad hoc data est Lex, quæ proderet ægrotos, non quæ tolleret. Ideo ergo ægroti illi qui in domibus suis secretiùs ægrotare possent, si illæ quinque porticus non essent, prodebantur oculis omnium in illis porticibus, sed à porticibus non sanabantur . . . Intendite ergo. Erant illæ porticus legem significantes, portantes ægrotos, non sanantes proidentes, non curantes. Cf. *In Er. Joh., Tract. 17*.

## XVI.

### THE MIRACULOUS FEEDING OF FIVE THOUSAND.

MATT. xiv. 15—21 ; MARK vi. 35—44 ; LUKE ix. 12—17 ; JOHN vi. 5—14.

IN St. Matthew the Lord's retiring to the desert place where this miracle was performed, connects itself directly with the murder of John the Baptist. (ver. 13.) He, therefore, retired, his hour not being yet come. St. Mark and St. Luke put also this history in connection with the account of the Baptist's death, though they do not give that as the motive of the Lord's withdrawal. St. Mark, indeed, mentions another reason which in part moved him to this, namely, that the disciples, the apostles especially, who were just returned from their mission, might have time at once for bodily and spiritual refection and refreshment, might not be always in a crowd, always ministering to others, never to themselves. (vi. 31.) But thither, into the wilderness, the multitude followed him, proceeding, not necessarily "*afoot*," (Mark vi. 33,) but "*by land*," as contradistinguished from him who went by sea : and this with such expedition, that although their way was much further than his, they "*outwent*" him, anticipated his coming, so that when he "*went forth*,"\* not, that is, from the ship, but from his solitude, and for the purpose of graciously receiving those who thus came, he found a great multitude waiting for him. Though this their presence was, in fact, an entire defeating of the very purpose for which he had withdrawn himself thither, yet not the less "*he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.*" (Luke ix. 11.) St. John's apparently casual notice of the fact that the Passover was at hand, (vi. 4,) is not so much with the intention of giving a point in the chronology of the Lord's ministry, as to explain whence these

\* Ἐξελθῶν, (Matthew, Mark,) = δεξιόμενος αὐτοῦς, (Luke.)

great multitudes came, that streamed to Jesus: they were journeying towards Jerusalem to keep the feast.

There is this difference in the manner in which the miracle is introduced by the three Evangelists, and by St. John, that they make the first question concerning the manner of providing for the needs of the assembled crowds to come from the disciples, in the shape of a proposal that the Lord, now that the day was beginning to decline, should dismiss them, thus giving them opportunity to purchase provisions in the neighboring villages; while in St. John it is the Lord himself who first suggests the difficulty, saying to Philip, "*Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?*" (vi. 5.) This difference, however, is capable of an easy explanation. It may well have been that our Lord spake thus unto Philip at a somewhat earlier period in the afternoon; and then left the difficulty and perplexity to work in the minds of the apostles, preparing them in this way for the coming wonder which he was about to work; bringing them, as was so often his manner, to see that there was no help in the common course of things,—and when they had acknowledged this, then, and not before, stepping in with his higher aid.\*

The Lord put this question to Philip, not as needing any counsel, not as being himself in any real embarrassment, "*for he himself knew what he would do,*" but "*tempting him,*" as Wiclif's translation has it,—which word if we admit, we must yet understand in its milder sense, as indeed our later translators have done, who have given it, "*to prove him.*"† (Gen. xxii. 1.) It was to prove him, what manner of trust he had in him whom he had himself already acknowledged the Messiah,—"*him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets did write,*" (John i. 45.)—and whether, remembering the great things which Moses had done, when he gave the people bread from heaven in the wilderness, and the notable miracle which Elisha, though on a smaller scale than that which now was needed, had performed, (2 Kin. iv. 43, 44,) he could so lift up his thoughts as to believe that he whom he had recognized as the Christ, greater therefore than Moses or the prophets, would be sufficient to the present need. Cyril sees a reason why Philip, rather than any other apostle, should have been selected to have this question put to him, namely that he had the greatest need of the teaching contained in it; and refers to his later words, "*Lord, show us the Father,*" (John xiv.

\* For the reconciliation of any apparent contradiction, see AUGUSTINE, *De Cons. Evang.*, l. 2, c. 46.

† *Ἡτοιμάζων αὐτόν.* Cf. AUGUSTINE, *De Serm. Dom. in Mon.*, l. 2, c. 9: Illud factum est, ut ipse sibi notus fieret qui tentabatur, suamque desperationem condemnaret, saturatis turbis de pane Domini, qui eas non habere quod ederent existimaverat.

8,) in proof of the tardiness of his spiritual apprehension.\* But whether this was so or not, Philip does not on the present occasion abide the proof. Long as he has been with Jesus, he has not yet seen the Father in the Son, (John xiv. 9,) he does not yet know that his Lord is even the same who openeth his hand and filleth all things living with plentuousness, who feedeth and nourisheth all creatures, who has fed and nourished them from the creation of the world, and who therefore can feed these few thousands that are now waiting on his bounty. He has no thought of any other supplies save such as natural means could procure, and at once names a sum, “two hundred pence,” as but barely sufficient, which yet he would probably imply was a sum much larger than any which they had in their common purse at the moment.†

Having drawn this confession of inability to meet the present need from the lips of Philip, he left it to work;—till, somewhat later in the day, “when it was evening, his disciples came to him” with the proposal, the only one which suggested itself to them, that he should dismiss the crowds, and let them seek for the refreshment which they required in the neighboring hamlets and villages. But the Lord will now bring them yet nearer to the end which he has in view, and replies, “*They need not depart; give ye them to eat:*” and when they repeat with one mouth what Philip had before affirmed, asking if they shall spend two hundred pence, (for them an impossible thing,) on the food required, (Mark vi. 37,) he bids them go and see what supplies they have actually at command. With their question we may compare Num. xi. 22, “Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them?” for in either question there is a mitigated infidelity, a doubt whether the hand of the Lord can really reach to supply the present need, though his word, here indeed only impliedly, has undertaken it. In the interval between their going and their return to him, they purchase, or rather secure for purchase, the little stock that is in possession of a single lad among the multitude; and thus is explained that in the three first Evangelists, the disciples speak of the five loaves and two fishes‡ as theirs,

\* CRAMER'S *Catena* (in loc.)

† The specifying of this sum as inadequate to the present need is peculiar to St. Mark and St. John: another of the many evidences against the view that would make St. Mark's Gospel nothing but an epitome now of St. Matthew's, now of St. Luke's. It is clear he had resources quite independent of theirs.

‡ Instead of *ἰχθυῆς*. St. John has *ὀψάρια*, both here and xxi. 9. This word, the diminutive of *ὀψων* (from *ἔψω*, to prepare by fire,) properly means any *προσψάγιον* or pulmentum, any thing, as flesh, salt, olives, butter, &c., which should be eaten as a relish with bread. But by degrees, as Plutarch (*Symp.*, l. 4, c. 4.) remarks, the terms *ὀψων* and *ὀψάριον* came in men's language to be restricted with a narrower use to fish

that is, standing at their command, in St. John as rather belonging to the lad himself.\*

With this slender stock of homeliest fare,† the Lord undertakes to satisfy all that multitude, (Chrysostom quotes aptly here Ps. lxxviii. 26: "Shall God prepare a table in the wilderness?") and bids his disciples to make them all recline on the "green grass," at that season of the year a delightful resting-place,‡ and which both by St. Mark and St. John is noted to have abounded in the place. St. Mark adds another graphic touch, how they sat down in companies, which consisted some of fifty, some of a hundred, and how these separate companies showed in their symmetrical arrangement like so many garden plots.§ In this subordinate circumstance we behold his wisdom, who is the lord and lover of order. Thus, all disorder, all noise and confusion were avoided; there was no danger that the weaker, the women and the children, should be passed over, while the stronger and ruder unduly put themselves forward; thus the apostles were able to pass easily up and down among the multitude, and to minister in orderly succession to the necessities of every part.

The taking of the bread in hand would seem to have been a formal act going before the blessing or giving of thanks for it.|| This eucharistic

alone, generally salt fish, that being the favorite or most usual accompaniment of bread. (See SUICER'S *Thes.*, s. v. ὀψάριον, *The Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Ant.*, s. v. Opsonium, and BECKER'S *Charikles*, v. 1, p. 436.)

\* Grotius: Apud alios Evangelistas dicuntur habere id quod in promptu erat, ut emi posset.

† The loaves are "barley loaves," the food even then, for the most part, of beasts and not of men (vile hordeum; cf. 2 Kin. vii. 1.) Thus in the Talmud one says, "There is a fine crop of barley," and another answers, "Tell this to the horses and asses." It was one of the indignities to which a Roman soldier who had quitted his ranks was submitted, that he was fed on barley instead of wheat bread. (LIV., l. 27, c. 13; SUTTON., *August.*, 24. See WETSTEIN on *John* vi. 9.)

‡ . . . prostrati gramine molli,  
Præsertim cum tempestas arridet, et anni  
Tempora consperguunt viridantes floribus herbas.

§ *Προσῳαί*, *προσῳαί*=areolatim. The *προσῳαί* are the square garden plots, in which herbs are grown. Theophylact: *Προσῳαί γὰρ λέγονται τὰ ἐν τοῖς κήποις ἐιάφορα κήματα, ἐν οἷς φητιύονται ἐιάφορα πολλάκις λάχανα.* Some derive it from *πίσας*, these patches being commonly on the edges of the vineyard or garden; others from *πράσον*, porrum, the onion being largely grown in them. Our English "in ranks," does not reproduce the picture to the eye, giving rather the notion of continuous lines. Wiclif's was better, "by parties." Perhaps "in groups," would be as near as we could get to it in English.

|| In Matthew and Mark, *εὐλόγησε*,—in Luke, *εὐλόγησεν αὐτοῖς*, sc. τοὺς ἄρτους,—in

act Jesus accomplished as the head of the household, and according to that beautiful saying of the Talmud, "He that enjoys aught without thanksgiving, is as though he robbed God." The words themselves are not given; they were probably those of the ordinary grace before meat in use in Israel. Having blessed the food, he delivered it to the apostles, who in their turn distributed to the different tables, if such they might be called,—the marvellous multiplication taking place, as many say, first in the hands of the Saviour himself, next in those of the apostles, and lastly in the hands of the eaters; yet at all events so that "*they did all eat and were filled.*"\* Of that multitude we may fitly say, that in them the promise of the Saviour, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," found a practical fulfilment. They had come taking no thought, for three days at least, of what they should eat or what they should drink, only anxious to hear the word of life, only seeking the kingdom of Heaven; and now the meaner things, according to the word of the promise, were added unto them.

Here too, even more than in the case of the water changed into wine, when we seek to realize to ourselves *the manner* of the miracle, it evermore eludes our grasp. We seek in vain to follow it with our imaginations. For, indeed, how is it possible to realize to ourselves, to bring within forms of understanding, any act of creation, any *becoming*? how is it possible in our thoughts to bridge over the gulf between not-being and being, which yet is bridged over in every creative act? And this being impossible, there is no force in the objection which one has made against the historical truth of this narrative, namely, that "there is no attempt by closer description to make clear in its details the manner and process in which this wonderful bread was formed." But this is the wisdom of the sacred narrator, to leave the description of the indescribable unattempted.† His appeal is to the same faith which believes

John, *καὶ ἐν χάριστήσας*, and this is the word which on the occasion of the second miracle of the same kind both Matthew (xv. 36,) and Mark (viii. 6,) use. There can be no doubt that the terms are synonymous: in further proof, compare Matt. xxvi. 27, with the parallels, 1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 24. See Grotius on Matt. xxvi. 26. The view of Origen, that our Lord wrought the wonder *πρὸ λόγου καὶ τῆ εὐλογίᾳ*, that this moment of taking the loaves into his hand and blessing, was the wonder-crisis, is sustained by the fact that all four Evangelists bring out this circumstance of the blessing, and most of all by St. Luke's words, *εὐλόγησεν αὐτὸ οὗτο*.

\* *Χορτάζομαι* was applied originally, as its derivation from *χάρτος* shows, to the foddering of cattle. The use of it as applied to men belongs chiefly to the later comic writers,—see the examples adduced by Athenæus, (*Deipnos.*, l. 3, § 56,) where one is justifying himself for using *χορτασθῆναι* as = *κορίσθῆναι*.

† Thus Hilary (*De Trin.*, 3, § 6): *Fallunt momenta visum, dum plenam frag-*

“that the worlds were formed *by the Word of God*, so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear.” (Heb. xi. 3.)

An analogy has been found to this miracle, and as it were a help to the understanding of it, in that which God does yearly in the corn-field, where a simple grain of corn cast into the earth multiplies itself, and in the end unfolds in numerous ears;—and out of this thought many beautiful remarks have been made;—as this, that while God’s every-day miracles had grown cheap in men’s sight by continual repetition, he had therefore reserved something, not more wonderful, but more out of use, to awaken men’s minds to a new admiration;—or, that as in the case of the water made wine, he did but compress into a single moment all those processes which in ordinary circumstances he, the same Lord of nature, caused more slowly to follow one upon another.\* But true as in its measure is this last observation, yet it cannot be left out of sight that the analogy does not reach through and through. For that other work in the field is the unfolding of the seed according to the law of its own being: thus, had the Lord taken a few grains of corn and cast them into the ground, and in a moment after, a large harvest had sprung up, this might have been termed such a divinely-hastened process.†

mentis manum sequeris, alteram sine damno portionis suæ contueris . . . Non sensus non visus profectum tam inconspicibilis operationis assequitur. Est, quod non erat; videtur quod non intelligitur; solùm superest ut Deus omnia posse credatur. Cf. AMBROSE, *Exp. in Luc.*, l. 6, c. 85.

\* Augustine (*Serm.* 130, 1): Grande miraculum: sed non multum mirabimur factum, si attendamus facientem. Ille multiplicavit in manibus frangentium quinque panes, si in terrâ germinantia multiplicat semina, ut grana pauca mitantur, et horrea replentur. Sed quia illud omni anno facit, nemo miratur. Admirationem tollit non facti vilitas sed assiduitas. And again (*In Ex. Job.*, *Tract.* 24): Quia enim . . . miracula ejus, quibus totum mundum regit, universamque creaturam administrat assiduitate viluerunt, ita ut penè nemo dignetur attendere opera Dei mira et stupenda in quolibet seminis grano; secundum ipsam suam misericordiam servavit sibi quaedam quæ faceret opportuno tempore præter usitatum cursum ordinemque naturæ, ut non majora sed insolita videndo stuperent, quibus quotidiana viluerant . . . Illud mirantur homines, non quia majus est, sed quia rarum est. Quis enim et nunc pascit universum mundum, nisi ille qui de paucis granis segetes creat? Fecit ergo quomodo Deus. Unde enim multiplicat de paucis granis segetes, inde in manibus suis multiplicavit quinque panes. Potestas enim erat in manibus Christi. Panes autem illi quinque quasi semina erant, non quidem terræ mandata, sed ab eo qui terram fecit, multiplicata. And again, *Serm.* 126, c. 3: Quotidiana miracula Dei non facilitate sed assiduitate viluerant. . . . Mirati sunt homines, Dominum Deum nostrum Jesum Christum de quinque panibus saginasse tot millia, et non mirantur per pauca grana impleri segetibus terras . . . Quia tibi ista viluerant, venit ipse ad facienda insolita, ut et in ipsis solitis agnosceres Artificem tuum. Cf. *Serm.* 247.

† In the apocryphal *Evangelium S. Thomæ* such a miracle is ascribed to the child



But with bread it is different, since before that is made there must be new interpositions of man's art, and those of such a nature as that by them the very life, which hitherto unfolded itself, must be crushed and destroyed. A grain of wheat could never by itself, and according to the laws of its natural development, issue in a loaf of bread. And, moreover, the Lord does not start from the simple germ, from the lifeless rudiments, in which all the seeds of a future life might be supposed to be wrapped up, and by him rapidly developed, but with the latest artificial result: one can conceive how the oak is unfolded in the acorn, but not how it could be said to be wrapped up in the piece of timber hewn and shaped from itself. This analogy then even as such is not satisfying; and, foregoing any helps of this kind,\* we must simply behold in this multiplying of the bread an act of divine omnipotence† on his part who was the Word of God,—not indeed now, as at the first, of absolute creation out of nothing, since there was a substratum to work on in the original loaves and fishes, but an act of creative accretion; the bread did grow under his hands, so that from that little stock all the multitude were abundantly supplied: “*they did all eat and were filled.*”

Thus He, all whose works were “signs,” and had a tongue by which they spoke to the world, did in this miracle proclaim himself the true bread of the world, that should assuage the hunger of men, the

Jesus, not indeed as regards the swiftness, but the largeness of the return. He goes out at sowing time with Joseph into the field, and sows there a single grain of wheat: from this he has the return of a hundred *cors*, which he distributes to the poor of the place. (THELO'S *Cod. Apocryphus*, p. 392)

\* The attempt to find in the natural world analogies, nearer or more remote, for the miracles, may spring from two, and those very opposite, sources. It may be that men are endeavoring herein to realize to themselves, so far as this is allowed them, the course of the miracle, and by the help of workings not wholly dissimilar, to bring it vividly before the eye of their mind,—delighted in thus finding traces of one and the same God in the lower world and the higher, and in marking how the natural and supernatural are concentric circles, though one wider than and containing the other: as when in animal magnetism analogies have been found to the healing power which streamed forth from Christ, and this even by some who have kept this obscure and perilous power of our lower nature altogether distinct from that pure element of light and life, which went forth and was diffused from him. Or these analogies may be sought out and snatched at in a very different spirit, in the hope of escaping from the miraculous in the miracle altogether; because in them there seems an approximation to such an escape; as when some have eagerly snatched at these same facts of animal magnetism, not as lower and remote analogies, but as identical, or well-nigh identical facts, with the miraculous healings of our Lord.

† Augustine (*In Ev. Joh., Tract. 9*): *Omnipotentia Domini quasi fons panis erat* and again (*Enarr. 2<sup>a</sup> in Ps. cx. 10*): *Fontes panis erant in manibus Domini.*

inexhausted and inexhaustible source of all life, in whom there should be enough and to spare for all the spiritual needs of all hungering souls in all ages.\* For, in Augustine's language, once already quoted, "He was the Word of God; and all the acts of the Word are themselves words for us; they are not as pictures, merely to look at and admire, but as letters which we must seek to read and understand."†

When all had eaten and were satisfied, the Lord bade the disciples to gather up the fragments which remained of the loaves, that nothing might be lost; the existence of these was itself a witness that there was enough and more than enough for all. (2 Kin. iv. 43, 44; Ruth ii. 14.) St. Mark makes mention that it was so done also with the fishes. For thus with the Lord of nature, as with nature herself, the most prodigal bounty goes hand in hand with the nicest and truest economy, and he who had but now shown himself God, again submits himself to the laws and proprieties of his earthly condition, so that as in the miracle itself his power, in this command his humility, shines eminently forth. At this bidding they collected fragments, which immensely exceeded in bulk and quantity the amount of provision with which they began. They filled twelve baskets with these. An apt symbol this of that love which exhausts not itself by loving, but after all its outgoings upon others, abides itself far richer than it would have done but for these, of the multiplying which there ever is in a true dispensing. (Compare 2 Kin. iv. 1—7, and Prov. xi. 24: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth.")

St. John,—who is ever careful to note whatsoever hastened and drew on the final catastrophe, whatsoever actively stirred up the malignity of Christ's enemies, whereto nothing more contributed than the expression of the people's favor,—he alone tells us of the effect which this miracle had upon the assembled multitude, how they recognized Jesus as the expected prophet, as him of whom Moses had foretold, the prophet like unto himself (Deut. xviii. 15.) whom God would raise up for them; and that, ever eager for new things, they would fain have set him at their head, the king and liberator of the nation. It was not merely the power which he here displayed that moved them so greatly, but it was

\* Thus Prudentius:—

Tu cibus panisque noster, tu perennis suavitas,  
Nescit esurire in aevum qui tuam sumit dapem,  
Nec lacunam ventris implet, sed fovet vitalia.

† Verbum Dei est Christus, qui non solum sonis sed etiam factis loquitur hominibus. And *In Er. Joh., Tract. 24*: Interrogemus ipsa miracula quid nobis loquantur de Christo; hebeant enim, si intelligantur, linguam suam.

Because a miracle of this very kind was one looked for from the Messiah. He was to repeat, so to say, the miracles of Moses. As he, the first redeemer, had given bread of wonder to the people in the wilderness, even so should the later Redeemer do the same.\* Thus too, when the first enthusiasm which this miracle had caused was over, the Jews compare it with that which Moses had done, not any longer to find here a proof that one with like or greater powers, was among them, but invidiously to depress the present by comparison with the past miracle; and by the inferiority which they found in this, to prove that Jesus was not that Messiah who had a right to rebuke and command them. "What sign showest thou, that we may see and believe thee? What dost *thou* work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread *from heaven* to eat," (John vi. 30, 31;) while thine, they would say, is but this common bread of earth, with which thou hast once nourished a few thousands.†

But although there is a resemblance between that miracle and this, yet the resemblance is more striking between this and another in the Old Testament,—that which Elisha wrought, when with the twenty loaves of barley he satisfied a hundred men. (2 Kin. iv. 42—44.) All the rudiments of this miracle there appear;† the two substances, one artificial, one natural, from which the many persons are fed, as here bread and fish, so there bread and fresh ears of corn. As here the disciples are incredulous, so there the servitor asks, "Should I set this before a hundred men?" as here twelve baskets of fragments remain, so there "they did eat and left thereof." Yet were they only the weaker

\* Schoettgen (*Hor. Heb.*, in loc., from the Midrasch Cokeleth): Quemadmodum Goel primus, sic quoque erit postremus. Goel primus descendere fecit Man, q. d. Exod. xvi. 4, Et pluere faciam vobis panem de cælo. Sic quoque Goel postremus descendere facit Man, q. d. Ps. lxxii. 16, Erit multitudo frumenti super terram.

† Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 21): Non uno die, sed annis quadraginta, nec de inferioribus materiis panis et piscis, sed de mannâ cælesti, nec quinque circiter sed sexcenta millia hominum protelavit.

‡ Tertullian notes this prefiguration of the miracles of Christ in those of his servants, against the Gnostics, who would fain have cut loose the New Testament from the Old, and found not merely distinction but direct opposition between the two (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 21): Invenies totum hunc ordinem Christi circa illum Dei hominem, qui oblatos sibi viginti hordeaceos panes cum populo distribui jussisset, et minister ejus proinde comparatâ multitudine et pabuli mediocritate, respondisset, Quid ergo hoc dem in conspectu centum hominum? Da, inquit, et manducabant . . . O Christum et in novis veterem! Hæc itaque quæ viderat, Petrus, et cum pristinis comparat, et non tantam retro facta, sed et in futurum jam tunc prophetantia recognoverat, interroganti Domino, quisnam illis videretur, cum pro omnibus responderet, Tu es Christus, non potest, non eum sensisse Christum, nisi quem noverat in scripturis, quem jam recensebat in factis.

rudiments of this miracle, and this for reasons which more than once have been noted. Chrysostom bids us observe this difference between the servant and the Lord; how the prophets having grace only in measure, so in measure they wrought their miracles; but the Son, working with infinite power, and that not lent him but his own, did all with much superabundance.\* Analogies to this miracle, but of a remoter kind, are to be found in the multiplying of the widow's cruse of oil and her barrel of meal by Elijah, (1 Kin. xvii. 16,) and in that other miracle of the oil, which, according to the prophet's word, continued to flow so long as there were vessels to contain it. (2 Kin. iv. 1—7.)†

\* Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 35): Cùm aliter ntique Dominæ per semetipsum operetur, sive per Filium; aliter per Prophetas famulos suos, maximè documenta virtutis et potestatis; quæ ut clariora et validiora, quâ propria, distare à vicariis fas est.

† I have promised at page 69 an example or two of the rationalist explanations of the miracles. It were to slay the slain to enter now-a-days on a serious refutation of them; new forms of opposition to the truth have risen up, but this has gone by; yet as curiosities of interpretation, they may deserve a passing notice. This then is the scheme of Paulus for a natural explanation of the present miracle. He supposes that, however many there were of the multitude who had nothing to eat, there were others who had stock and store by them; which was the more probable on the present occasion, as we know that the Jews, when travelling to any distance, were accustomed to carry their provisions with them,—and of this multitude many were thus coming from far to the passover at Jerusalem. These stores, although hitherto they had withheld from the common needs, yet now, put to shame by the free liberality of Jesus, they brought forth and distributed, when he had shown them the example, and had himself first done this with the small stock at his command. Many difficulties certainly seem to stand in the way of this,—that is, of the Evangelists having actually meant to relate this; for Paulus does not say that they made a mistake, and turned an ordinary event into a miracle, but that this is what they actually intended to record. It is, for example, plainly a difficulty that, even supposing the people to have followed “the example of laudable moderation” which Jesus showed them, there should have remained twelve baskets of fragments from his five loaves. But to this he replies that they indeed affirm nothing of the kind. St. John, for instance, (vi. 13.) is not asserting this, but is accounting for the fact that there should be any residue at all, explaining why the Lord should have had need (ver. 12) to bid gather up a remnant, from the circumstance that the apostles had set before the people so large a supply that there was more than enough for all;—and it is exactly, he says, this which ver. 13 affirms, which verse he thus explains: “For they got together (*συνήγαγον οὖν*) and had filled (*εἰπέσαν*, an aor. 1. for plusq. perf.) twelve baskets with fragments (*i. e.*, with bread broken and prepared for eating) of the five loaves, which were more than enough (*ἄ ἐπερίσσειεν*) to the eaters;”—so that John is speaking, not of remnants *after* the meal, but of bread broken *before* the meal. That this should be called presently after a *σημεῖον* (ver. 14), does but mean a *sign* of his humanity and wisdom, by which he made a little to go so far. But this may suffice.

## XVII.

### THE WALKING ON THE SEA.

MATT. xiv. 22—33; MARK vi. 45—52; <sup>John</sup>LUKE vi. 14—21.

THE three Evangelists who narrate this miracle agree in placing it in immediate sequence to the feeding of the five thousand, and on the evening of the same day. The two first relate, that when all was over and the multitude were fed, the Lord "*straightway constrained his disciples to get into a ship,*" a phrase in itself not very easily accounted for, and finding probably its best explanation in the fact which St. John alone relates, that the multitude desired to take Jesus and make him a king. (vi. 15.) It is likely that the disciples had notice of this purpose of the multitude,—indeed, they could scarcely have avoided knowing it; and this was exactly to their mind, so that they were most unwilling to be parted from their Master in this hour, as they deemed it, of his approaching exaltation. St. Jerome gives the reason more generally, that they were reluctant to be separated even for a season from their beloved Lord.\* While *he* was dismissing the assemblage, they were to return, according to St. Mark, to Bethsaida, which does not contradict St. John, when he says they "*went over the sea towards Capernaum;*" since this Bethsaida, not the same which St. Luke has made mention of but just before, and which for distinction was called Bethsaida Julias, but that of which we have already mention, (John i. 44,) the city of Philip and Andrew and Peter, lay on the other side of the lake, and in the same direction as, and in the neighborhood of, Capernaum. St. Matthew, and St. Mark with him, would seem to make two evenings to this day,—one which had already commenced ere the preparations for the feeding of the multitude had begun, (ver. 15;) the other, now

\* So Chrysostom: Το "ἠνάγκασεν" δὲ εἶπεν, τὴν πολλὴν προσεδρίαν δεικνὺς τῶν μαθητῶν.

when the disciples had entered into the ship and begun their voyage. (ver. 23.) And this was an ordinary way of speaking among the Jews, the first evening being very much our afternoon, (compare Luke ix. 12, where the “*evening*” of Matthew and Mark is described as the day beginning to decline;) the second evening\* being the twilight, or from six o’clock to twilight; on which the absolute darkness followed. It was the first evening, or afternoon, when the preparations for feeding the five thousand commenced; the second, when the disciples had taken ship.

But in the absence of their Lord they were not able to make any effectual progress: “*the wind was contrary,*” and the sea was rough: their sails, of course, could profit them nothing. It was now “*the fourth watch of the night,*” near morning therefore, and yet with all their efforts and the toil of the entire night, they had not accomplished more than “*five and twenty or thirty furlongs,*” scarcely, that is, more than half of their way, the lake being forty or forty-five furlongs in breadth. Probably they were ever finding themselves more unable to proceed, the danger probably was ever heightening—when suddenly they see their Lord “*walking on the sea,*”† and already close to their bark.

\* Ὁψία δευτέρα.

† Many have supposed that there is a scoff against this miracle intended by Lucian (*Ver. Hist.*, l. 2, c. 4.) in his account of the cork-footed race, (*φελλοπόδες*), whom in his voyage he past ἐπὶ τοῦ πελάγους διαθείουτας. I confess it seems to me a question whether so expert a scoffer, if he had meant this, would not have done it better; while at the same time the hint which he gives, l. 1, c. 2, that there is something under these absurd and extravagant travellers’ tales which he has strung together, that they contain every one allusions to the fables and portents of poets and historians and *philosophers*, makes it not altogether improbable; and in the *Philopseudes*, where there seem to me far more evident allusions to the miracles of the Gospel,—as for instance, a miraculously-healed man taking up his bed, (c. 11,) the expulsion of the evil spirit from a demoniac, (c. 16,) reminding one singularly of that recorded Mark ix. 14—29; this also of walking on the water recurs (c. 13,) among the incredible things proposed for the wise man’s belief. Not otherwise the Golden City of the Blest, with its diamond walls, its floors of ivory, and its trees bearing fruit every month, (*Ver. Hist.*, l. 2, c. 11—13,) may very well be written in rivalry and in ridicule of the description of the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxi.; as the story of the great multitude of men who are comfortably housed for some years in the belly of a whale (*Ib.*, l. 1, c. 30—42,) may be intended in the same way to be an outdoing of the story of Jonah and his three days’ abode in a like place, which we know from more allusions than one was an especial object of the flouts of the heathen. See AUGUSTINE, *Ep.* 102, qu. 6; and Josephus (*Antt.*, l. 9, c. 10, § 2.) who aimed to make his words acceptable to the cultivated Roman world, gets over it with a λόγος—as some say. On the point of view under which Lucian contemplated Christianity there is an essay by KREBS, *De Malitioso Luciani Consilio*, &c. in his *Opusc. Acad.*, p. 308; and the subject is discussed in TZSCHIRNER’S *Fall des Heidenthums*; p. 320.

After they had left him, and when he had likewise "*sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray, and when even was come, he was there alone.*" But from thence, with the watchful eye of love, "*he saw them toiling in rowing,*" (cf. Exod. iii. 7 ; Ps. lvi. 8,) and now, so soon as they had made proof that without him they could do nothing, he was with them once more. For it had been his purpose in all this, as Chrysostom well brings out, to discipline and lead them up to ever higher things than they had learned before. In the first storm he was present in the ship with them ; and thus they must have felt all along, that if it came to the worst they might rouse him, and the very consciousness of his presence must have given them the sense of comparative security. But he will not have them to be clinging only to the sense of his bodily presence,—as ivy, needing always an outward support,—but as hardy forest trees which can brave a blast ;—and this time he puts them forth into the danger alone, even as some loving mother-bird thrusts her fledglings from the nest, that they may find their own wings and learn to use them. And by the issue he will awaken in them a confidence in his ever-ready help ; for as his walking over the sea must have been altogether unimagined by them, they may have easily despaired of that help reaching them, and yet it does not fail them. When he has tried them to the uttermost, "*in the fourth watch of the night,*" he appears beside them, thus teaching them for all their after life, in all coming storms of temptation, that he is near them ; that however he may not be seen always by their bodily eyes, however they may seem cut off from his assistance, yet is he indeed a very present help in the needful time of trouble.

Nor can we, I think, fail to recognize the symbolic character which this whole transaction wears. As that bark was upon those stormy seas, such is oftentimes the Church. It seems as though it had not its Lord with it, such little way does it make ; so baffled is it and tormented by the opposing storms of the world. But his eye is on it still ; he is in the mountain apart praying ; ever living, an ascended Saviour, to make intercession for his people. And when at length the time of urgent need has arrived, he is suddenly with it, and that in marvellous ways past finding out,—and then all that before was laborious is easy, and the toiling rowers are anon at the haven where they would be.\*

\* Thus Bede: Labor discipulorum in remigando et contrarius eis ventus labores sanctæ Ecclesiæ varios designat, quæ inter undas seculi adversantis et immundorum flatus spirituum ad quietem patriæ cœlestis, quasi ad fidam litoris stationem, pervenire conatur. Ubi bene dicitur, quia navis erat in medio mari et ipse solus in terrâ: quia nonnunquam Ecclesia tantis Gentilium pressuris non solum afflicta, sed et fœdata est,

The disciples were terrified at the first apparition of the Lord, “*for they supposed it had been a spirit:*”<sup>\*</sup> even as often he is mistaken still, when he comes to his people in some unaccustomed form, by some unwonted way, in the shape of some affliction, in the way of some cross; they too cry out for fear, though indeed he comes charged with blessing. They mistake him for some terrible phantom, till his well-known voice, his “*Fear not, it is I,*” reassures them, and they know with whom they have to do.† And yet, if indeed it was he, and if he was indeed coming to the help of his own, that which perplexed them the most, being seemingly a contradiction of any such purpose, was, that when he came nigh to the bark, “*he would have passed them by.*” (Mark vi. 48.) It perplexed *them* for a moment; it has perplexed others lastingly: for it has been said by those who are seeking to discover inner inconsistencies in the Gospels, Why wish to pass them by and to escape them, when he was coming for this very purpose, that he might reassure them and aid them? and when he was no sooner discovered, or at least detained by their cries, than he ascended into the ship where they were? There can be no doubt that this, even as every other dealing of God with his people, is difficult to be understood of them, to whom the standing point of faith is altogether strange. This apparent passing by, on the Lord’s part, of his disciples, was that by which their prayer was to be called out, that he would *not* pass them by, that he would *not* forsake them.‡ Exactly in the same way, walking with his two disciples to Emmaus, after his Resurrection, “*he made as though he would have gone further,*” thus drawing out from them the entreaty that he would abide. And at the root of what a multitude of God’s other dealings

ut, si fieri posset, Redemptor ipsius eam prorsus deseruisse ad tempus videretur . . . Videt [tamen] Dominus laborantes in mari, quamvis ipse positus in terrâ; quia est ad horam differre videatur auxilium tribulatis impendere, nihilominus eos, ne in tribulationibus deficient, suæ respectu pietatis corroborat, et aliquando etiam manifestò adjutorio, victis adversitatibus, quasi caleatis sedatisque fluctuum voluminibus, liberat. Cf. AUGUSTINE, *Serm.* 75. So, too, Anselm (*Hom.* 3): Nam quia insurgunt fluctus, potest ista navicula turbari, sed quia Christus orat, non potest mergi.

\* Φάντασμα = φῶμα νεκροῦν. (Job xx. 8.)

† Calvin: Pii . . . audito ejus nomine, quod illis est certum et divini amoris et suæ salutis pignus, quasi à morte in vitam excitati animos colligunt, et quasi serenum cælum hilares conspiciunt, quieti in terrâ resident, et omnium malorum victores ejus præsidium omnibus periculis opponunt.

‡ Augustine (*De Cons. Evang.* l. 2, c. 47): Quomodo ergo eos volebat præterire, quos paventes ita confirmat, nisi quia illa voluntas prætereundi ad eliciendum illum clamorem valebat, cui subveniri oportebat? Corn. à Lapide: Volebat præterire eos, quasi eos non curans, nec ad eos pertinens, sed aliò pergens, ut in eis metum et clamorem excitaret.



does something of the same kind lie : so that this is not an insulated circumstance, but one which finds its analogies every where in the Scripture, and in the Christian life. What part does Christ sustain here different from that which in the parable of the unjust judge, (Luke xviii. 2,) or the churlish friend, (Luke xi. 5,) he makes God to sustain ? or different from that which he himself sustained when he came not to the help of the sisters of Bethany when their need seemed the highest ? And are not all such cries of the faithful in the Psalms as this, "Lord, why hidest thou thy face ?" confessions that he does so deal with his servants, that by delaying and seeming to pass by, he calls out their faith, and their prayers that he would come to them soon and abide with them always ?

But now, being as it were detained by that cry, he at once scatters and rebukes their fears : "*Be of good cheer, it is I ; be not afraid.*" Whereupon follows that characteristic rejoinder of Peter, which, with its consequences, St. Matthew alone records : "*Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.*" That "*if*" must not be interpreted as implying any doubts upon his part whether it was the Lord or not : a Thomas, indeed, may have desired to have him with him in the ship, ere he would fully believe that it was no phantom, but the Lord himself ; but the fault of a Peter would not be in this line. Rather do the words mean : "*Since it is thou, command me to come unto thee.*" He feels rightly that Christ's command must go before his coming. And, doubtless, there was in the utterance of this desire the promptness of love, which made him desire to be where his Lord was. (Cf. John xxi. 7.) It may be, too, that he would fain compensate for that exclamation of terror in which he had joined with the rest, by an heroic act of courage and affiance. Yet, at the same time, was there, as the issue proved, something mingling with all this, which made the whole incident a rehearsal of his greater presumption and greater fall, which should hereafter come to pass. In that "*Bid me,*" the fault lay. He would go before the other disciples ; he would signalize himself by a mightier testimony of faith than any of the others will dare to render. It is but again, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I."

We should not fail to observe, and with reverence to admire, the wisdom and love of the Lord's answer. Another, having enough of spiritual insight to detect the fault which lurked in Peter's proposal, might yet by a coarser treatment have marred all, and lost for one in Peter's condition the lesson which it so much imported him to receive ; had he, for instance, bid him to remain where he was, at once checking the outbreaks of his fervent spirit, which, when purified from all of earthly which clung to them, were to carry him so far in the work of

his Lord, and quite losing for him the instruction which by his partial failure he should win. But with more gracious and discriminating wisdom the great Master of souls; who yet, knowing what the event must prove, pledges not himself for the issue of his coming. Peter had said, "*Bid me,*" but he does not reply, "I bid thee." Peter had said to "*come to thee,*" but he does not reply, "*Come to me,*"—only "*Come ;*" that is, "*Come, if thou wilt ; make the experiment, if thou desirest.*" In that "*Come,*" an assurance is indeed involved that Peter should not be wholly swallowed up by the waves, but no pledge for the successful issue of the feat; which yet, according to his faithfulness, would have been involved, had his words been the entire echo of his disciple's. This successful issue depended upon Peter himself,—whether he should keep the beginning of his confidence firm unto the end. And the Lord, who knew what was in him, knew that he would not;—that this was not the pure courage of faith;—that what of carnal overboldness there was in it would infallibly be exchanged, when the stress of the trial came, for fear and unbelief.

And so it proved. Peter for a while did walk—so long as he looked to his Lord and to him only, he also was able to walk upon the unsteady surface of the sea; to tread upon the *waters* which for him also were not *waves*. But when he took counsel of flesh and blood, when he saw something else besides Jesus, when, because "*he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid,*" then he began to sink,—not, that is, his feet only to be wetted, but he began to be submerged; and he who thought to make a show openly of his greater courage before all the other disciples, must now in the presence of them all confess his terror, and reveal the weakness, as he had thought to display the strength, of his faith. In this his peril his swimmer's art (John xxi. 7) profits him nothing; for there is no mingling of nature and grace in this way. He who has entered the wonder-world of grace must not suppose that he may fall out of it at any moment that he will, and betake himself to his old resources of nature; he has foregone these, and must carry out what he has begun, or fail at his peril.

But Peter has to do with one who will not let him greatly fall; his experience shall be that of the Psalmist: "When I said, My foot slip-peth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." His "*Lord, save me,*" is answered at once. "*Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him.*" And then how gracious the rebuke! "*Thou little believing,*" not, "*Thou unbelieving;*" and "*Wherefore didst thou doubt?*" not, "*Wherefore didst thou come?*" not checking, as he then would have done, the future impulses of his servant's boldness, but rather encouraging them, showing him how he could do all things through Christ

strengthening him, and that his fault lay, not in having undertaken too much, but in having too little believed the strength that would uphold him in his undertaking.\* And not until by that sustaining hand he has restored confidence to the fearful one, and made him feel that he can indeed tread under foot those waves of the unquiet sea, does he speak even this word of a gentle rebuke. The courage of the disciple has returned, so that the Master speaks of his doubt as of something which is already past: “*Wherefore didst thou doubt?* Before the doubt arose in thy heart, thou didst walk on these waves, and now that thy faith has returned, thou dost walk on them again; thou seest that it is not impossible, that it lies but in thy faithful will; that all things are possible to him that believeth.”

Nor can we look at this episode of the miracle as otherwise than itself also symbolic. Peter is here the image of all the faithful of all ages, in the seasons of their weakness and their fear. So long as they are strong in faith, they are able to tread under foot all the most turbulent agitations of an unquiet world; but when they lose heart and fear, when instead of “looking unto Jesus,” they look at the stormy winds and waters, then these prevail against them, and they begin to sink, and were it not for Christ’s sustaining hand, which is stretched out in answer to their cry, they would be wholly overwhelmed and swallowed up.†

Those that are watching for contradictions between the parallel narratives of the Evangelists, affirm that here they find such a one, between John on one side, and Matthew and Mark on the other; that according to the two last, the Lord did after this ascend into the ship, which indeed from their accounts is plain, for “*he went up unto them into the ship;*” while St. John says only, as these will have it, that they were *willing* to receive him; but implies by his silence that they did not in fact do so,

\* Bengel: Non reprehenditur quod exierit e navi, sed quod non manserit in firmitate fidei.

† Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps. xxxix. 6*): Calca mare, ne mergaris in mari. And again (*Serm. 86, c. 6*): Attendite seculum quasi mare, ventus validus et magna tempestas. Unicuique sua cupiditas, tempestas est. Amas Deum, ambulas super mare: sub pedibus tuis est seculi tumor. Amas seculum, absorbebit te. Amatores suos vorare novit, non portare. Sed cum fluctuat cupiditate cor tuum, ut vincas tuam cupiditatem, invoca Christi divinitatem . . . Et si motus est pes tuus, si titubas, si aliqua non superas, si mergi incipis, dic, Domine, pereo, libera me. Dic, Domine, pereo, ne pereas. Solus enim à morte carnis liberat te, qui mortuus est in carne pro te. And again: Titubatio ista, fratres, quasi mors fidei fuit. Sed ubi exclamavit, fides iterum resurrexit. Non ambularet, nisi crederet, sed nec mergeretur, nisi dubitaret. In Petro itaque communis omnium nostrum consideranda conditio, ut si nos in aliquo temptationum ventus conatur subvertere, vel unda submergere, clamemus ad Christum. Cf. *De Cant. Novo, c. 2.*

the ship being rapidly, and, as would appear, with miraculous swiftness, brought to the end of its course. The whole question turns on the phrase which we translate, and I have no doubt rightly as regards the circumstance which actually took place, "*They willingly received him into the ship.*" It is quite true that the words themselves mean no more than this: "They were willing to receive him into the ship;" but with the implicit understanding that what they were willing to do, they did. They who before were terrified and dreaded his approach, as though he had been a spirit, were now willing to receive him into the ship with them, and did so receive him.\* Chrysostom indeed understands it otherwise, that he did not ascend into the ship. He supposes St. John to be relating a different event from that recorded by the other Evangelists, which is beyond measure improbable.

Neither St. Matthew nor St. Mark mentions the swift and sudden bringing of the ship to "*the land whither they went,*" which seems implied by the account of St. John, but only that "*the wind ceased*" so

\* It may be a question whether we should not have done better in leaving the words ἠθελον λαβεῖν αὐτόν, "They were willing to receive him." Thus it was in the Vulgate, Voluerunt recipere eum, and so in our earlier English translations. It is probably to Beza's influence that we owe the change;—he translates the words, Volente animo receperunt eum, and defends the translation thus: Itaque verbum ἠθελον opponitur ei quod ante dixerat, eos videlicet fuisse perterritos: ex quo intelligitur ipsos initio fuisse eum aversatos, nunc verò agnità ejus voce et mutatis animis eum quem fugiebant, cupidè accepisse in navem. This is perfectly true, also that ἠθελειν is frequently used with an infinitive, as the adverb (= sponte) to the verb which is so taken out of its infinitive mood. Yet had the passage been left, "They were willing to receive him," it would have been quite clear what the sacred historian meant, that this willingness which, now when they knew it was indeed their Master, they felt, issued in the actual receiving of him: and none could then accuse the translators of going out of their way to produce a harmony which in the original did not, at least at all so evidently, exist. That ἠθελε means often to wish to do a thing and to do, we have abundant proof in the Greek of the N. T. Thus Matt. xviii. 23, a king desired to take account (ἠθέλησεν συνᾶραι λόγον) with his servants, and as we know from the sequel did so. In like manner, John i. 44, Jesus desired to go forth into Galilee (ἠθέλησεν ἐξελθεῖν), and as we learn c. ii. 1, actually went. The word when no more is added, may quite as well imply an accomplished, as a balked, desire. It is of this passage, capable of this most easy explanation, that one has lately written, "By the irreconcilable contradiction between John and the synoptic evangelists in the matter of receiving Christ into the ship, one or other account *must* be given up." To be sure he does his best to make a difficulty, if he cannot find one, for he says καὶ in the second clause of ver. 21 must be taken adversative,—"They were willing to receive him into the ship, *but* straightway the ship was at the land," so that, as he would make St. John to say, their purpose was hindered; and De Wette in the same way, Aber alsbald war das Schiff am Lande. Let any one be a judge of the honesty of such a tampering with the record on which judgment must proceed.

soon as the Lord was “*come into the ship.*” St. Mark, however, relates how this and all which they had witnessed called forth the infinite astonishment of his disciples: “*they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered;*” and St. Matthew tells us how the impression was not confined to them alone: but others who were sailing with them, probably the crew,\* and it may be some other passengers in the same vessel, described generally as “*they that were in the ship,*”—these also caught a glimpse, a momentary one it may have been, of him with whom they had to do, and “*came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God;*” (cf. John i. 49;) for they felt more or less clearly that they had to do with one who stood in wonderful relation with him of whom it is written, “*Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known;*” (Ps. lxxvii. 19;) “*Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters;*” (Hab. iii. 15;) “*Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.*” (Job ix. 8.†)

It is a docetic view of the person of Christ,‡ which conceives of his body as permanently exempt from the laws of gravity, and thus explains the miracle; a hard and mechanical view, which makes the seat of the miracle to have been in the waters rendered solid under his feet. For rather was it the will of Christ which bore him triumphantly above those waters; even as it was to have been the will of Peter, that will indeed made in the highest degree energetic by faith on the Son of God, which should in like manner have enabled him to walk on the great deep, and, though with partial and transient failure, did so enable him.

\* Jerome: *Nautæ atque vectores.*

† ‘Ο περιπατῶν, ὡς ἐπ’ ἐδάφους, ἐπὶ θαλάσσης. Eusebius (*Dem. Evang.*, l. 9, c. 12.) finds a special fulfilment of these words of Job in this miracle of our Lord, and also he finds in these waves the symbol of a mightier and wilder sea, even that of sin and death, which Christ trod under his feet when he, in a far higher sense than that in which the words were first spoken,

. . . metus omnes et inexorabile fatum  
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Aetherontis avari;

and he quotes Ps. lxxiv. 13, 14, “*Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength, thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters; thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest them to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness;*” and Job xxxviii. 16, 17, where the Almighty says to man, “*Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? Have the gates of death been opened unto thee, and hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?*” that is, “*Hast thou done this, as I have done?*”

‡ The Cathari, a Gnostic sect of the middle ages, actually appealed to this miracle in confirmation of their views concerning the body of Christ, as a heavenly, and not a truly human, body. (NEANDER, *Kirch. Gesch.*, v. 5, p. 1126.)

It has been already observed that the miracle, according to its true idea, is not the violation, nor yet the suspension of law, but the incoming of a higher law, as of a spiritual in the midst of natural laws, and the momentary asserting for that higher law, the predominance which it was intended to have, and but for man's fall it would always have had, over the lower ; and with this a prophecy of the prevalence which it shall one day recover. So was there here the sign of the lordship of man's will, when that will is in absolute harmony with God's will, over external nature. In regard of this very law of gravity, a feeble, and for the most part unconsciously possessed, remnant of his power survives to man in the well-attested fact that his body is lighter when he is awake than sleeping ;\* from whence we conclude that the human consciousness, as an inner centre, works as an opposing force to the attraction of the earth and the centripetal force of gravity, however unable now to overbear it.†

\* It was noticed long ago by PLINY, *H. N.*, l. 7, c. 18. Every nurse that has carried a child would bear witness to the fact.

† Prudentius (*Apotheosis*, 655,) has some sounding lines upon this miracle :—

Ipse super fluidas plantis nitentibus undas  
Ambulat, ac presso firmat vestigia fluctu ;  
Incepat ipse notos, et flatibus otia mandat . . .  
Ninguidus agnoseit Boreas atque imbrifer Eurus  
Nimborum dominum, tempestatumque potentem.  
Excitantque hyemem verrunt ridente sereno.

## XVIII.

### THE OPENING THE EYES OF ONE BORN BLIND.

#### JOHN ix.

It appears upon the whole most probable that this work of power was wrought upon the same day on which the memorable discourse was spoken, beginning at John vii. 34, and continuing to the end of the viiith chapter,—a discourse of which the history of the woman taken in adultery is only an interruption, and an intercalation which easily betrays itself as such. In this case it will be, that as our Lord was passing through the city from the temple, to escape the sudden outbreak of Jewish anger, he paused to accomplish this miracle—probably in the immediate neighborhood of the temple, which we know was oftentimes the place where beggars, cripples, and other such sufferers, took their station. (Acts iii. 1, 2.) There is nothing in the narrative to mark a break; on the contrary, the “*passed by*” of the final verse of chapter viii. seems taken up by the same word in the first verse of this.\* It is an additional argument in favor of this view, that we know that other discourse to have been spoken on a Sabbath: for it was spoken on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, (vii. 37,) which was always such, and this healing took place also on a Sabbath. (ix. 14.) Moved by these reasons, the ancient interpreters would not see here any break in the narrative, and with them most of the moderns consent.†

It has been objected against this, that on that day he evidently departed alone from the temple; while here his disciples are with him. But it is easy to suppose that they also extricated themselves, though not

\* Unless indeed viii. 59 is spurious. It is wanting in many authorities, and in others great variations of the reading, always a suspicious circumstance, occur.

† As Maldonatus, Tittman, Tholuck, Olshausen.

in the same wonderful manner as he did, from the excited multitude, and joined their Lord without. It has been objected, too, that Christ appears to have wrought this work more leisurely, more without fear of interruption, than well could have been, immediately after the moment when he had been compelled to withdraw from the fury of his enemies. Yet this circumstance should be rather taken as affording a beautiful picture of *his* calmness in the midst of his enemies, who found no time unfit for a work of mercy and love; who even at the moment when he had hardly escaped the stones of the Jews, paused to accomplish this work of grace. There seems, indeed, as we shall see, allusion to something of the kind at ver. 4, 5. "There is need," our Lord would say, "that I should work this work now, however out of season it may seem: for this '*night*,' which the hatred of the Jews is bringing on, is near, and then the time for working will be over." (Compare the exactly parallel passage, John xi. 7—10.)

The sad history of this man "*blind from his birth*,"\* may have been already familiar to his disciples, as he was evidently a well-known beggar in Jerusalem, one with whose story many were acquainted; (ver. 8;) or it may have been one of his ways of stirring pity and compassion in the passers by, to announce that his calamity reached back so far, and thus it may have come to the knowledge of the disciples, and proved the occasion of their question. They would fain learn from their Master, who was able to solve every difficulty which rose up in their minds, "*Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*" But what they could have meant by this latter alternative, when they supposed as possible that it was for his *own* sins that the man was *born* blind, has naturally been the source of much perplexity.

Three or four explanations have been offered; the first, that the Jews believed in a transmigration of souls; and that these sins which the disciples assumed as possible causes of his blindness, were those of some anterior life,—sins which were being punished and expiated now. This, as is well known, is the Buddhist doctrine; and not an accident, but belonging to the centre of their religious convictions; but it cannot be proved that there was any such faith among the Jews. It may have been the dream of a few philosophic Jews, but was never the faith of plain and simple men: so that this explanation may be regarded, as Olshausen declares it, altogether as antiquated, and not worthy even to be considered.

\* Ἐκ γενεῆς = ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς, Acts iii. 2. The healing of the blind man here, and the lame man there, have this point of resemblance, that in each a life-long defect is removed.



Lightfoot adduces passages to show that the Jews believed a child might sin in its mother's womb, in proof of which they referred to the struggle between Jacob and Esau ; (Gen. xxv. 22 ;) and he, and others after him, think that out of this popular belief the question grew.

Tholuck, following an earlier interpreter, supposes that the theory of the apostles was, that God had foreknown some great sin which this man would commit, and so by anticipation had punished him. But as such a dealing on God's part is altogether without analogy in Scripture, so is there not the slightest hint that men had ever fallen on it as an explanation of the suffering in the world ;—and, indeed, they could not : for while the idea of retribution is one of the deepest in the human heart, this of punishment which runs before the crime which it punishes, is not one in which it would easily find itself.

Chrysostom imagines that it was upon their part a *reductio ad absurdum* of the argument which connected sin and suffering together. It could not be this man that brought this penalty on himself,—for he was born with it. It could not be the sin of his parents that brought it on him ; for we know that each man shall bear his own burden ;—that the children's teeth are not set on edge because the parents ate sour grapes. But this is very artificial, and with little of likelihood in it. Honest and simple-hearted men, like the apostles, would have been the last to try and escape a truth, to which the deepest things in their own hearts bore witness, by an ingenious dilemma.

For myself, I am rather inclined to think that they did not see, at the moment when they asked the question, the self-contradiction, as far at least as words go, which was involved in one side of the question—in the form at least in which they presented it to their Master ; that, while they rightly, and by a most true moral instinct, discerned the links which unite the sin and suffering of the world together, yet in this case they did not see how it must have been the sin and suffering, not of this man as an individual, but of him as making part of a great whole, which were thus connected together : how the fact of this calamity reaching back to the birth excluded the uncharitable suspicion, that wherever there was a more than ordinary sufferer, there was a more than ordinary sinner,—leaving only the most true thought, that a great sin must be cleaving to a race of which any member could so suffer.

This, as it is continually affirmed in Scripture, so it cannot be denied in Christ's answer, "*Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents,*"—to which words must be added, "that he should be born blind." The Lord neither denies their sin nor his : all that he does is to turn away his disciples from that most harmful practice of diving down with cruel

surmises into the secrets of other men's lives, and, like the friends of Job, guessing for them hidden sins in explanation of their unusual sufferings. This blindness, he would say, is the chastening of no *peculiar* sin on his own part, or on his parents'. Seek, therefore, neither here nor there the cause of his calamity; but see what nobler explanation the evil in the world, and this evil in particular, is capable of receiving. The purpose of the life-long blindness of this man is "*that the works of God should be made manifest in him*;" and that through it and its removal the grace and glory of God might be magnified. We must not, indeed, understand our Lord's declaration as though this man was used merely *as a means*, visited with this blindness to the end that the power of God in Christ might be manifested to others in its removal. The manifestation of the works of God has here a wider reach, and embraces the lasting weal of the man himself; it includes, indeed, the manifestation of those works to the world and *on* the man; but it does not exclude, rather of necessity includes, their manifestation *to* him and *in* him. It entered into the plan of God for the bringing of this man to the light of everlasting life, that he should thus for a while be dark outwardly; that so upon this night, and on the night of his heart at once, a higher light might break, and the Sun of righteousness arise on him, with healing in his wings for all his bodily and all his spiritual infirmities: while again this was part of a larger whole, and fitted in, according to his eternal counsels, to the great scheme for the revelation of the glory and power of the Only-begotten unto the world. Cf. John xi. 4; Rom. v. 20; ix. 17; xi. 25, 32, 33.)

Yet while it was thus, we are not to accept this as the whole explanation of this man's blindness. For it is the pantheistic explanation of evil, that it is not really evil, but only the condition of, and the transition to, a higher good; only appearing, indeed, as evil at all from a low standing point, which does not take in the end from the beginning. But this solution of the world's evil, tempting as it is, so tempting that multitudes are unable to resist its attractions, is yet not the Christian, which ever recognizes the reality of evil, even while that evil, through the boundless resources of the Divine love, magnifies more the glory of God, and ultimately exalts higher the blessedness of the creature. This cannot, then, be the whole explanation of the blindness which this man had brought with him into the world; but God, who though not the author, is yet the disposer, of evil,—who distributes that which he did not himself bring in, according to the counsels of his wisdom and righteousness and grace, had willed that on this man should be concentrated more than the ordinary penalties of the world's universal sin, that a more than ordinary grace and glory might be revealed in their removing.

The Lord's words that follow, "*I must work the works of him that sent me\* while it is day ; the night cometh, when no man can work : As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world,*" are, as it were, a girding of himself up to, and a justifying of, his coming work. Whatever perils beset that work, yet it must be accomplished ; for his time, "*the day*" of his open activity, of his walking up and down among the people, and doing them good, was drawing to an end. "*The night,*" when he should no longer lighten the world with his presence, or have the opportunity of doing, with his own hands at least, works like these, was approaching. He worked in the day, and was himself the light of the day. The image is borrowed from our common day and our common night, of which the first is the time appointed for labor : the latter, by its darkness, opposes to many kinds of labor, obstacles insurmountable. The difficulty which Olshausen finds in the words, "*when no man can work,*" inasmuch as however Christ was himself withdrawn from the earth, yet his disciples did effectually work,† rises solely from his missing the point of the proverbial phrase. Our Lord means not to say, "*The night cometh in which no other man can work, in which no work can be done ;*" but what he would affirm, in the language of a familiar proverb which has its truth when applied to the heavenly kingdom, is this, No man who hath not done *his* work in the day, can do it in the night ; for him the time cometh in which he cannot work,—and he applies this even to himself.‡ And then, with a prophetic allusion to the miracle which he was going to perform, he would say, "*What fitter task for me than this of opening the eyes of the blind ? for as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world : what work could become me better than this, which is so apt a symbol of my greater spiritual work, the restoring of the darkened spiritual vision of the race of men ?*"§

Having thus justified and explained his coming work, our Lord proceeds to the cure. "*When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground*

\* This was a favorite Arian passage ; see AUGUSTINE, *Serm.* 135, c. 1—4, and his answer there to their abuse of these words.

† The same difficulty strikes Augustine : Numquid nox erat, quando claudus ille ad verbum Petri salvus effectus est, immo ad verbum Domini habitantis in Petro ? Numquid nox erat, quando transeuntibus discipulis ægri cum lectulis ponebantur, ut vel ambra transeuntibus tangerentur ?

‡ The power of triviality can reach no further than it has reached in the exposition of Paulus : "I must heal this man's eyes, while there is yet daylight to see, for when it is dark I could not attempt so fine and delicate an operation." See back, pp. 65—68.

§ So Cyril : Ἐπειπερ ἀφίγμαι φωτίσων τὰ ἐν ἐνδείᾳ φωτὸς, δεῖ με καὶ τοῖς τοῦ σώματος τὸ φῶς μεταδοῦναι.

and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay." A medicinal value was attributed in old time to saliva,\* and we have a similar instance of its use in the case of another blind man, (Mark viii. 23,) and also in the case of one who was suffering not from the same defect, but from a defect in the organs of speech and hearing; (Mark vii. 33;) neither are we altogether without examples of the medicinal use of clay.† Yet it would plainly be an entirely erroneous view of the matter, to suppose that *besides* his divine power, the Lord *also* used natural remedies, or that these were more than conductors, not in themselves needful, but which he willingly assumed to be the channels for the conveying of his power; for we observe at other healings of the blind no intervention of such means finding place. (Matt. xx. 30—34.) Probably the reasons which induced the use of these means were ethical; it was perhaps a help for the weak faith of the man to find that something external was done.

There may be again a question what was the exact purport of the command, "*Go wash in the pool of Siloam.*" Was the healing itself connected with that washing? or was the moistened clay the one conductor of the healing power, and the washing merely designed to remove the hinderances which the medium of cure would itself, if suffered to remain, have opposed even to the restored organs of vision? Thus I should understand it. Whatever other motive the command may have

\* The virtue especially of the saliva jejuina, in cases of disorders of the eyes, was well known to antiquity. Pliny (*H. N.*, l. 28, c. 7.) says, *Lippitudines matutinâ quotidie velut ununctione arceri.* In both accounts (Suetonius, *Vespas*, c. 7; Tacitus, *Hist.*, l. 4, c. 8.) of that restoring of a blind man to sight, attributed to Vespasian, the use of this remedy occurs. In the latter the man appears begging of the emperor, *ut genas et oculorum orbes dignaretur respergere oris excremento*; and abundant quotations to the same effect are to be found in Wetstein (*in loc.*)

† Thus Serenus Samonicus, a physician in the time of Caracalla, who wrote a poem upon medicine:

Si tumor insolitus typho se tollat inani,  
Turgentes oculo vili circumline cæno.

In this healing by clay, while yet the dust, or that out of which the clay is moulded, is that which most often afflicts and wounds the eyes, Augustine (*In. Er. Joh.*, *Tract.* 2.) finds a striking analogy with the healing of flesh through flesh, our flesh through Christ's flesh: *Gloriam ejus nemo posset videre, nisi carnis humilitate sanaretur. Unde non poteramus videre? Irruerat homini quasi pulvis in oculum, irruerat terra, sauciaverat oculum, videre non poterat lucem: oculus ille sauciatus inungitur; terrâ sauciatus erat, et terra illuc mittitur, ut sanetur. . . . De pulvere cæcatus es, de pulvere sanaris: ergo caro te cæcaverat, caro te sanat.* See the meaning of the use of this means for restoration, which Irenæus, l. 5, c. 15, finds.

had, it at any rate served as a proof, however slight a one, of the man's faith, that he willingly went as he was bidden.

It must further be asked, Did St. John trace something significant and mystical in the etymology of Siloam that he should introduce it here?—"which is by interpretation Sent." It is scarcely probable that he did not acknowledge some allusion in the name to the present fact, or some prophecy of Christ's great work of healing and washing; for had he not done so, it is little likely that he would have brought in the derivation, which, if it had possessed no religious significance, might have been appropriate enough in a lexicon, but one would scarcely expect to meet in a gospel.

Olshausen dissents from Tholuck, who finds in this "*sent*" a reference to Christ himself, on the ground that upon the present occasion the Lord was not the "*Sent*," but the sender. Yet might there well be allusion here in the mind of the Evangelist, not to this particular healing, in which it is true he is rather sender than sent, but to the whole work of his ministry, which was a *mission*,\* which he ever characterizes as a work whereto he was the sent of God, (John vii. 29; viii. 42;) so that he bears this very title, "the *Apostle* of our profession." (Heb. iii. 1.) These waters of Siloam, in which the blind man washed and was illuminated, may well have been to the Evangelist the image of the waters of baptism, or indeed of the whole cleansing work of a commissioned Saviour for the opening the eyes of the spiritually blind; and the very name which the pool bore may have had in his eyes a fitness, which by this notice he would indicate as more than accidental.

The man was obedient to the word of the Lord; "*He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing;*" returned, that is, according to all appearance, to his own house; it does not seem that he came back to the Lord. His friends and neighbors are the first who take note of the thing which has been done; well-disposed persons, as would appear, but altogether under the influence of the Pharisees. They wonder, debate whether it is indeed he whom they had known so long; for the opening of the eyes would have altered the whole countenance; being convinced that it is, they would fain learn how the cure was

\* Augustine (*Serm.* 135, c. 1): Quis est ipse Missus, nisi qui dixit in ipsâ lectione, Ego, inquit, veni ut faciam opera ejus qui misit me; and in *Ev. Joh., Tract.* 44: Misit illum ad piscinam quæ vocatur Siloe. Pertinuit autem ad Evangelistam commendare nobis nomen hujus piscinæ, et ait, Quod interpretatur Missus. Jam quis sit Missus agnoscitis: nisi enim ille fuisset missus, nemo nostrum esset ab iniquitate dimissus. So Chrysostom, *Hom.* 57 in *Joh.* On St. John's derivation of Siloam, see THOLUCK'S *Beiträge zur Sprachklärung des N. T.*, p. 123, sq., where he also enters into the hard question of its position, whether at the east or west side of the city.

effected, and see him who had wrought it; and at length, as the safest course, they bring the man, with no evil dispositions either towards him or towards Christ, to their spiritual rulers,—not, that is, before the great Sanhedrim, for that was not always sitting, but the lesser. The work may have seemed questionable to them, especially as having been wrought on the Sabbath; the mention just at this place of the day on which the healing was accomplished seems inserted as the explanation of their having found it necessary to bring the case before their ecclesiastical rulers, “*the Pharisees,*” as St. John calls them; not that the Sanhedrim exclusively consisted of these, (for Caiphas was a Sadducee, and see also Acts xxiii. 6;) but these being the most numerous and influential party there, and the bitterest enemies of the Lord.

Here there was a more formal examination into the circumstances under which the healing had taken place, and the man again told his simple tale: “*He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and do see.*” Some of the Pharisees present seek the miracle of its significance, by bringing out that it was accomplished on the Sabbath,\*—so that, granting its reality, it did not prove any thing in favor of him that wrought it; rather was it to be inferred, since he was thus an evident transgressor of God’s commandment, that he was in connection with the powers of evil. No lighter charge than that which they made at another time, when they said, “*He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils,*” (Matt. ix. 34,) was involved in this word of theirs. But there was throughout all these events, which were so fatally fixing the fortunes of the Jewish people, an honest and a better party in the Sanhedrim, of which Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were the noblest representatives; men like the Poles and Contarinis at another great epoch of the Church; not in number, perhaps less in courage, equal to the stemming of the great tide of hostility which was rising against the truth,—a tide which probably in the end drew most even of them into its current (compare John xii. 42, 43): only here and there one and another, such as those above-named, extricating themselves from it. These from time to time made their voices to be heard in the cause of right and of truth. Thus, on the present occasion, did they at the first claim that he should not at once be adjudged a sinner and a breaker of God’s law, who had done such signs as these. Even their own Rabbi were not altogether at one con-

\* The littleness of the Rabbinical casuistry with regard to the Sabbath, and the works permitted and forbidden on that day, are almost inconceivable. Thus Lightfoot quotes from a treatise on this subject: *Vinum in medium oculi injici [sabbato] prohibitum, poni super palpebras licitum. Alter dicit, sputum etiam super palpebras poni prohibitum.*

cerning what was permitted on the Sabbath, and what not: some allowing quite as much as this and more, for only the alleviation of disorders in the eyes. Therefore they might plead that the Spirit of God might well have directed him in this that he did, and they ask, "*How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?*" Yet the shape which their interference takes, the form of a question in which it clothes itself, is, as Chrysostom remarks, that of timid and irresolute men, who dare only to hint their convictions. No wonder that they should be in the end overborne and silenced by their more unscrupulous adversaries, even as now they prove unequal to the obtaining a fair and impartial hearing of the matter.

The interrogation in the verse following, "*What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?*" has been frequently, though erroneously, understood, not as one question, but as two. The mistake is a very old one, for Theodore of Mopsuestia finds fault with them who divide the question here into two clauses, "*What sayest thou of him? That he hath opened thine eyes?*" making the second to have its rise in the doubts which the Pharisees felt or pretended to feel concerning the reality of the miracle. In truth there is but one question, "*What sayest thou of him in that he hath opened thine eyes? what conclusion drawest thou from thence?*" and thus the answer is to the point, "*He said, He is a prophet:*"\*—not yet the Son of God, not yet the Messiah; of these higher dignities of his benefactor he as yet has no guess, but what he believes him he boldly declares him, "*a prophet,*"—one furnished with powers and a message from above. When they asked this, it was not that they cared in the least for the judgment of the man, but they hoped to mould him and make him an instrument for their own wicked purposes. Chrysostom, indeed, whom Theophylact and Euthymius follow, makes this "*What sayest thou of him?*" the speech of the better disposed in the Sanhedrim, who hope that the testimony of the man himself may go for something; but this is little probable. They would fain have had him turn against his benefactor, and they hoped that, seeing what would be welcome to them, he would follow the suggestions which they had thrown out, and attribute the opening of his eyes to the power of an evil magic. But a rare courage from above is given to him, and he dares in the face of these formidable men whom he is making his foes, to avouch his belief that the work and the doer of the work were of God.

\* Our version no doubt in general conveys to the English reader the wrong impression; it had done so at least for many years to me. Yet the manner of pointing, with the absence of the second note of interrogation, shows that the translators had in fact apprehended the passage.

They now summon his parents, hoping to be more successful in dealing with them. Their desire is to get a lie from them, and that they should say their son had not been born blind. But neither in this quarter do they find any help. His parents make answer as persons who refuse to be made accomplices in a fraud, although without any high desire to witness or to suffer for the truth's sake; on the contrary, there is something of selfishness in the manner in which they extricate themselves from the difficulty, leaving their son in it. They avail themselves of the fact that he was of full age, able therefore judicially to answer for himself, and altogether decline to enter on the question of how his sight had been restored to him; since they could not have told the truth without saying something that should have been to the honor of Jesus,—and so they would have come under the penalties which the Sanhedrim had lately declared against any that should “*confess that he was Christ.*” We are not to understand by this that the Sanhedrim had formally declared him to be an impostor, a false Christ, but only that while the question of the truth or falsehood of his claims to be the Messiah was not yet clear,—and they, the great religious tribunal of the nation, had not given their decision,—none were to anticipate that decision; and the penalty of so doing, of a premature confession of him, was, that he who made it should be cast out of the synagogue,—that is, should be excommunicated. Now there appear to have been two, or some say three kinds of excommunication among the Jews, greatly differing in degrees and intensity, and our Lord often alludes to them, not as though they were a slight matter, but as among the sharpest trials which his servants would have to endure for his name's sake. The mildest was an exclusion for thirty days from the synagogue, to which period, in case the excommunicated showed no sign of repentance, a similar or a longer period, according to the will of those that imposed the sentence, was added: in other ways too it was made keener; it was accompanied with a curse; none might hold communion with him now, not even his family, except in cases of absolute necessity. Did he show himself obstinate still, he was in the end absolutely separated from the fellowship of the people of God, cut off from the congregation,—a sentence answering, as many suppose, to the delivering to Satan in the apostolic Church. (1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Tim. i. 20.)\*

\* Our Lord is thought to allude to all these three degrees of separation, Luke vi. 22, expressing the lightest by the ἀφορίζω, the severer by the ἀνειδίξω, and the severest of all by the ἐκβάλλω. Yet after all it is doubtful whether these different grades of excommunication were so accurately distinguished in our Lord's time. (See WINER'S *Real Wörterbuch*, s. v. Bann, and VITRINGA, *De Synagoga*, p. 738.)



The man had been removed, while his parents were being examined. The Pharisees now summon him again, and evidently by their address would have him to believe that they had gotten at the root of all, and discovered the whole fraud, so that any longer persisting in it would be idle. They are as men seeking to obtain confession from one they suspected, by assuring him that others have confessed, and so that for him to stand out in denying, will only make matters worse for him in the end. Now we know, they would say, that it is all a collusion; we have indubitable proofs of it; do thou also give glory to God, and acknowledge that it is so. Our "*Give God the praise*," sets the reader of this passage quite upon a wrong track. The Pharisees do not mean, "Give the glory of your cure to God, and not to this sinful man, who in truth could have contributed nothing to it,—attempting," in Hammond's words, "to draw him from that opinion of Christ which he seemed to have, by bidding him to ascribe the praise of his cure wholly to God, and not to look on Christ with any veneration." So indeed Jeremy Taylor, in his sermon, *On the return of prayers*; "The spiteful Pharisees bid him give glory to God, and defy the minister; for God indeed was good, but he wrought that cure by a wicked hand." But this cannot be their meaning; for they did not allow that any cure had taken place at all, on the contrary, professed to believe that it was all a fraud, gotten up between Christ and the man who was before them. The words are rather an adjuration to him that he should speak the truth.\* Hitherto he has been acting as though he could deceive not merely men but God, but now let him honor God, give glory to him in uttering that which is truth before him, showing so that he believes him to be a God of truth and righteousness and power, whom no lie will escape, and who will be the avenger of all ungodliness of men.† And then in proof they add, "*We know that this man is a sinner*, a more than ordinary transgressor, one therefore to whom least of all would God have given this higher power; your story then cannot be true; we that have the best means for knowing, know this." They will overbear him with the authority of their place and station, and with their confident assertion.

\* A comparison with Josh. vii. 19, where Joshua, urging Achan to confess, uses exactly the same language, "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him," shows this to be the meaning. The phrase is often used more generally as an adjuration to repentance of every kind, which is indeed in the highest sense a taking shame to ourselves, and in that a giving glory only to God. (1 Sam. vi. 5; Jer. xiii. 16; 1 Esdr. ix. 8; Rev. xvi. 9.)

† Seneca (*Ep.* 95) speaks very nobly of this giving glory to God, as the great work of every man: *Primus est Deorum cultus, Deos credere: deinde reddere illis majestatem suam, reddere bonitatem, sine quâ nulla majestas est.*

The man whom we recognize throughout as a ready-witted, brave, and genial man, declines altogether to enter on the question whether his Healer was this "sinner" or not; yet, as Chrysostom observes, does not in the least admit by his answer the alternative that he was so. This is a matter which he knows not; he will speak, however, the thing which he does know, and will let them draw their own conclusions; and that which he does know is, that he was blind and now he is seeing. They perceive that they can gain nothing in this way, and they require him to tell over again the manner of his cure, hoping either to detect some contradictions in his story, or to find something which they can better lay hold of, and wrest into a charge against Christ; or perhaps utterly perplexed how to escape from their present entanglement, they ask for this repetition to gain time, and in the hope that some light may break upon them presently.

But the man has grown weary of the examinations to which his inquisitors are now submitting him anew, and there is something of defiance in his answer. "To what purpose to tell it all over to you again? I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again?" And then, with an evident irony, "Will ye also\* be his disciples?" It is clear that these words cut them to the quick, though it is not so clear what exactly is the taunt conveyed by them. Is it this? "How idle to tell you over again, when there is that deep-rooted enmity in your hearts against this man, that, though convinced a hundred times, you would yet never acknowledge it, or sit as learners at his feet.† Will ye also become his disciples? I trow not." This is the commonest explanation of the words, yet it agrees not perfectly with their reply, which is an earnest repelling the indignity of being, or meaning to be, disciples of his. But according to that common view of the man's words, he could not have accused them of any such intention; on the contrary his charge was, that no evidence, no force of truth, could win them to be such. It seems therefore better to suppose that the man, in this last clause of his answer, affects to misunderstand their purpose in asking a repetition of his story. "Is it then, indeed, that the truth is winning you also to its side, so that you too wish now to find my story true, and yourselves to acknowledge this man for your master?" Then the answer of the Pharisees will exactly agree. Nothing could have been more stinging to them than the bare supposition

\* In the  $\kappa \alpha \dot{\iota}$   $\acute{\iota} \mu \epsilon \tau \acute{\iota}$ s of the man there lies, as Chrysostom has observed, a confession that *he* was, or intended to be, a follower of this prophet. Bengel: Jueundè observari potest fides apud hunc hominem, dum Pharisei contradicunt, paulatim exoriens.

† Calvin: Significat quamvis centies convicti fuerint, maligno hostileque affectu sic esse occupatos ut nunquam cessuri sint.

of such a discipleship on their part: "*They reviled him and said, Thou art his disciple, but we are Moses' disciples.*" They set, as was their wont, Moses against Christ, and contrast their claims. "*We know that God spake unto Moses; we know that he had a commission and an authority; as for this fellow, we know not whence he is; all is uncertain about him; there is no proof that God has given him a commission; we know not whether he be from above or from beneath.*"

This confession of their inability to explain this new and wonderful appearance, this acknowledgment that they were at fault, emboldens the man yet further; they had left a blot, and this plain yet quick-witted man does not fail to take instant advantage of it. It is impossible to miss an irony keener yet than the last in his retort: "But this at least is wonderful; here is one who has opened mine eyes, who is evidently so clothed with powers mightier than man's, as to be able to do this miracle; and you, the spiritual rulers of our nation, you that should try the spirits, that should be able to tell of each new appearance whether it be of God or not, here acknowledge your ignorance, and cannot tell of this man whence he is, whether of earth or of heaven.\* But I know, for you have yourselves declared it, (see ver. 24,) *that God heareth not sinners*; but he hath heard this man,—he hath enabled him to do a work without parallel; therefore I know whence he is; he is of God; for were he not, he could do none of the things which he has done."

It is interesting here to observe how his faith and insight and courage had grown during this very examination. He who had said a little while before, *Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not,*" (ver. 25,) avoiding the answer, now says boldly, "*We know that God heareth not sinners.*" Nor need we take exception, as many have done, at his maxim, "*God heareth not sinners,*" nor bring out, as they have thought it needful to do, that these words have no Scriptural authority,† being

\* Compare our Lord's question to his adversaries, Matt. xxi. 25: "The baptism of John whence was it? (*πῶθεν ἦν*;) from heaven or of men?" which best explains the *πῶθεν* (= *ἐν ποίῳ ἐξουσίᾳ*, ver. 24,) here. In the same way Pilate's question to our Lord, "*Whence art thou?*" (John xix. 9) is to be explained: "To what world dost thou belong?"

† Thus Origen (*in Isai., Hom. 5*): *Peccatores exaudit Deus. Quod si timetis illud quod in Evangelio dicitur; Scimus quia peccatores non exaudiat Deus, nolite pertimescere, nolite credere. Cæcus erat qui hoc dixit. Magis autem credite ei qui dicit, et non mentitur, Etsi fuerint peccata vestra ut coccinum, ut lanam dealbabo. Augustine (Serm. 136): Si peccatores Deus non exaudit, quam spem habemus? Si peccatores Deus non exaudit, ut quid oramus et testimonium peccati nostri tunsione pectoris dicimus. He alludes to Luke xviii. 10, and proceeds: Certè peccatores Deus exaudit. Sed ille qui ista dixit, nondum laverat faciem cordis de Siloâ. In oculis ejus præcesserat sacramentum: sed in corde nondum erat effectum gratiæ beneficium.*

words neither of Christ nor of one of his inspired servants, but only of a man not wholly enlightened yet, in whose mind truth and error were yet mingled together. That the words have not in themselves any authority is most true; yet they may well be allowed to stand, and in the intention in which the speaker used them. For the term "sinner" has a two-fold meaning in Scripture: sometimes it is applied to all men as they are fallen children of Adam, and each one with the burden of his own sin upon him. If taking the word in this sense, it were said, "*God heareth not sinners,*" this were indeed to say, God heareth not any man; or if by "*sinners*" were understood those who have been in time past more than ordinary transgressors, and it were said that they will not now be heard, though they truly turn, this were indeed an impeaching of the grace of God. But the Scripture knows another and emphatic use of the term "*sinners,*"—men *in their sins*, and not desiring to be delivered out of them; and in this sense, which is the sense of the speaker here, as of the better among the Pharisees, who a little earlier in the day had said, "*How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?*" (ver. 16, cf. x. 21.) it is most true that God does not hear sinners; their prayer is an abomination, and even if they ask, they obtain not their petitions.\* (Isai. i. 15; lix. 1, 2; Prov. i. 28; xv. 8; xxviii. 9; Ps. l. 16; lxvi. 18; cix. 7; Job xxvii. 9; xxxv. 13; Jer. xiv. 12; Mic. iii. 4.)

But this was what least of all they could endure, that the whole relations between themselves and this man should thus be reversed,—that he should thus be their teacher; and while it was now plain that no-

Quando lavit faciem cordis sui cæcus iste? Quando eum Dominus foras missum à Judæis, intromisit ad se. Cf. *Serm.* 135, c. 5. Elsewhere *Con. Lit. Parmen.*, l. 2, c. 8,) he shows that his main desire is thus to rescue the passage from Donatist abuses. These last, true to their plan of making the sacraments and other blessings of the Church to rest on the subjective sanctity of those *through* whose hands they passed, and not on the sure promises of him *from* whose hands they came, quoted this passage in proof: "*God heareth not sinners;*" how then can they minister blessings to others? It would be enough to answer that it is not them whom God hears, but the Church which speaks through them. And because of this abusive application of the words, it needed not to make exception against the statement itself, as though it smacked of error from which the man was not yet wholly delivered. But Calvin better: Falluntur qui cæcum ex vulgi opinione sic loquutum esse putant. Nam *peccator* hic quoque ut paulò ante *impium* et *sceleratum* significat. (ver. 24) Est autem hæc perpetua Scripturæ doctrina, quod Deus non exaudiat nisi à quibus verè et sincero corde vocatur. . . . Ideo non male ratiocinatur cæcus, Christum à Deo profectum esse, quem suis votis ita propitium habet.

\* The words are so true that Jeremy Taylor has made them the text of three among his noblest sermons, entitled *The return of Prayers; or The conditions of a prevailing prayer.*

thing could be done with him, that he could neither be seduced nor terrified from his simple yet bold avowal of the truth, their hatred and scorn break forth without any restraint: "*Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?*"—"altogether," not imperfect in body only, but, as they now perceive, maimed and deformed in soul also.\* "*Thou that comest forth from thy mother's womb with the note of thy wickedness upon thee, dost thou school us? dost thou presume to meddle and be a judge in such matters as these? And they cast him out,*"—which does not merely mean, as some explain it, (Chrysostom, Maldonatus, Grotius, Tholuck,) rudely flung him forth from the hall of judgment, wherever that may have been; but, according to the decree which had gone before, they declared him to have come under those sharp spiritual censures which they had threatened against any that should join themselves unto the Lord. Only so the act would have the importance which (ver. 35) is attached to it. No doubt the sign and initial act of this excommunication was the thrusting him forth and separating him as unclean from their own company; † and so that other explanation of the passage has its relative truth. ‡ Yet this was not all, or nearly all, which was involved in these words, "*They cast him out.*" This violent putting of him out of the hall of audience, was only the beginning of the things which he should suffer for Christ's sake.

But in him were to be fulfilled in a very eminent sense those words, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake." (Luke vi. 22.) He is cast out from the meaner fellowship, to be received into the higher,—from that which was about to vanish away, to be received into a kingdom not to be moved,—from the synagogue to the Church: the Jews cast him out, and Christ received him: "When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up." (Ps. xxvii. 12.) He has not been ashamed of Christ, and now Christ reveals himself unto him as he had not done before: no longer as the prophet from God, for to this only his faith had hitherto reached, but as the Son of God himself. Thus, "to him that

\* Bengel: Exprobrant de cæcitate pristinâ. Calvin: Perinde illi insultant, acsi ab utero matris cum scelerum suorum notâ prodiiisset. It is characteristic enough that they forget that the two charges, one that he had never been blind, and so was an impostor,—the other that he bore the mark of God's anger in a blindness which reached back to his birth,—will not agree together.

† Corn. à Lapide: Utrumque eos fecisse est credibile, scilicet cæcum ex domo, et hoc symbolo ex Ecclesiâ suâ, eiecisse. Ἐκβάλλειν will then have the technical meaning which it afterwards retained in the Church. (See SUICER'S *Thes.*, s. v.)

‡ See VIERINGA, *De Synagoga*, p. 743.

hath is given," and he ascends from faith to faith. "*Jesus heard that they had cast him out,*" and, himself the Good Shepherd, went in search of this sheep in this favorable hour for bringing him home to the true fold;—"and when he had found him," encountered him, it may be, in the temple, (cf. John v. 14.) "*he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*" The man knows what the title means, that it is equivalent to Messiah, but he knows not any one who has a right to claim it for his own: such trust, however, has he in his Healer, that whomsoever he will point out to him as such, he will recognize. "*He answered and said unto him, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.*" These words, "*Thou hast seen him,*" do not refer to some anterior seeing—for it does not appear that the man after his eyes were opened at the pool, returned to the Lord, or that he had enjoyed any opportunity of seeing him since. This past then is in some sense a present: "*Thou hast seen him already; this seeing is not something yet to do; ever since thou hast been speaking with me thine eyes have beheld him, for it is no other than he himself that talketh with thee.*"\*

And now that to which all that went before was but an introduction, has arrived; "*He said, Lord, I believe; and he worshipped him:*" not that even now we need suppose that he knew all that was contained in that title, Son of God,—or that in this worshipping him we are to understand the very highest act of adoration as unto God. For the fact of "*God manifest in the flesh,*" is far too great a one for any man to receive at once: the minds, even of apostles, could only dilate little by little to receive it. There were, however, in this man the preparations for that ultimate and crowning faith: the seeds which would unfold into it were safely laid in his heart; and he fell down at the feet of Jesus as of one more than man, with a deep religious reverence and fear and awe. And thus the faith of this poor man was accomplished; step by step he had advanced, following faithfully the light which was given him; undeterred by opposition which would have been fatal to a weaker faith, and must have been so to his, unless the good seed had cast its roots in a soil of more than ordinary depth. But because it was such a soil, therefore, when persecution arose, as it soon did, for the Word's sake, he was *not* offended; (Matt. xiii. 21;) but endured, until at length the highest grace was vouchsafed to him, to know the only-begotten Son of God, however yet he may not have seen *all* the glorious treasures that were contained in the knowledge of him.

So wonderful was the whole event, so had it brought out the spiritual

\* Corn. & Lapide: *Et vidisti eum, nunc cum se tibi ipse videndum offert.*

blindness of those that ought to have been the seers of the nation, so had it ended in the illumination, spiritual as well as bodily, of one who seemed among the blind, that it called out from the Saviour's lips those remarkable words in which he moralized the whole: "*For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind* : I am come to reveal every man's innermost state ; I, as the highest revelation of God, must bring out men's love and their hatred of what is divine as none other could : (John iii. 19—21 :) I am the touchstone ; much that seemed true shall at my touch be proved false, to be merely dross ; much that for its little sightliness was nothing accounted of, shall prove true metal : many, whom men esteemed to be seeing, such as the spiritual chiefs of this nation, shall be shown to be blind : many, whom men counted altogether unenlightened, shall, when my light touches them, be shown to have powers of spiritual vision undreamt of before." Christ was the King of truth,—and therefore, his open setting up of his banner in the world was at once and of necessity a ranging of men in their true ranks, as lovers of truth or lovers of a lie ;\* and he is here saying of himself the same thing which Simeon had said of him before : "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel . . . *that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*" (Luke ii. 34, 35.) He is the stone on which men build, and against which men stumble,—and set for either purpose. (1 Pet. ii. 6—8 ; cf. 2 Cor. ii. 16.) These words call out a further contradiction on the part of the Pharisees, and out of this miracle unfolds itself that discourse which reaches down to ver. 21 of the ensuing chapter. They had shown what manner of shepherds of the sheep they were in their exclusion of this one from the fold : "with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them," (Ezek. xxxiv. 4 :) † our Lord sets over against them himself, the good Shepherd and the true.

\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh., Tract. 44*) : Dies ille diviserat inter lucem et tenebras.

† This whole chapter of Ezekiel may be profitably read in the light of the connection between these 9th and 10th chapters of St. John.

## XIX.

### THE RESTORING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND.

MATT. xii. 9—13; MARK iii. 1—5; LUKE vi. 6—11.

THIS is not the first of our Lord's sabbathic cures,\* which stirs the ill-will of his adversaries, or is used by them as a pretext for accusing him; for we saw the same to occur in the case of the miracle immediately preceding; yet I have reserved for this the considering once for all the position which our Lord himself took in respect of the Jewish Sabbath, and the light in which he regarded it. The present is the most favorable occasion which will occur, since here, and in the discourse which immediately precedes this miracle, and which stands, if not quite in such close historic connection as might at first sight appear on reading it in the Gospel of St. Matthew, yet in closest inner relation to it, our Lord himself enters upon the subject, and delivers the weightiest words which upon this matter fell from his lips. To go back then to that preceding discourse, and the circumstances which gave rise to it;—the Pharisees found fault with the disciples for plucking ears of corn and eating them upon the Sabbath; they accused them to their Master as transgressors of the law: "Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?" It was not the thing itself, as though it had

\* The cures on the Sabbath actually recorded are seven in number, and are the following:—that of the demoniac in the synagogue of Capernaum, (Mark i. 24;) that of Simon's wife's mother, (Mark i. 29;) of the impotent man at Bethesda, (John v. 9;) of this man with a withered hand; of the man born blind, (John ix. 14;) of the woman with a spirit of infirmity, (Luke xiii. 14;) of the man who had a dropsy, (Luke xiv. 1.) We have a general intimation of many more, as at Mark i. 34, and have already observed that the "one work" to which our Lord alludes, at John vii. 21—23, is perhaps not any of the miracles which he has recorded at length, but one to which we have no further allusion than that contained in these verses.



been an invasion of other men's property, for that was by the law itself expressly permitted ;\* they might not thrust in a sickle to another man's field, but might pluck the ripe ears for the stilling of their present hunger. (Deut. xxiii. 25.) By restrictions upon an absolute proprietorship, even slight as this, did God assert that he was indeed the true proprietor of all the land, and that the holders held it only of him. It was in the day on which they plucked these ears that their fault consisted.

Our Lord seeks to raise the objectors to a truer standing point from which to contemplate the act of his disciples ; and by two examples, and these taken from that very law which they believed they were asserting, would show them how the law, if it is not to work mischievously, must be spiritually handled and understood. These examples are borrowed, the one from the Old Testament history, the other from the service of the temple which was evermore going on before their eyes. The first, the well-known event which occurred during David's flight from Saul, (1 Sam. xxi. 1—6,) his claiming and obtaining from the high priest the holy bread, was such as would naturally carry much weight with them whom Christ was seeking to convince, David being counted the great pattern and example of Old Testament holiness ; " Will ye affirm that they did wrong,—David who in that necessity claimed, or the priest who gave to him the holy bread ?" The second example came yet nearer home to them with whom he was speaking, and was more stringent still, for it was not an exceptional case, but grounded in the very constitution of the Levitical service : " Ye do yourselves practically acknowledge it right that the rest of the Sabbath should give place to a higher interest, to the service of the temple ; that, as the lesser, it should be subordinated, and, where needful, offered up to this as the greater : the sacrifices, with all the laborious preparations which they require, do not cease upon the Sabbath ; (Num. xxviii. 8, 9 ; ) all which is needful for completing them, is upon that day carried through : yet no one accounts the priests to be therefore in any true sense profaners of that holy day ; † rather would they be so, if they did not do these things." ‡

\* See ROBINSON'S *Researches*, v. 2, p. 192.

† They had themselves a maxim which expressed this very thing: *Ministerium pellit Sabbatum*.

‡ It is the same argument which he pursues John vii. 22, 23. There he says, " For the sake of circumcision you do yourselves violate the Sabbath. Rather than not keep Moses' commandment, which requires the child to be circumcised upon the eighth day, you will, if that day fall upon a Sabbath, accomplish all the work of circumcision upon that. You make, that is, the Sabbath, which is lower, give place

And then, lest the Pharisees should retort, or in their hearts make exception, that the work referred to was done in the service of the temple, and was therefore permitted; but that here there was no such serving of higher interests, he adds, "But I say unto you that in this place is one greater than the temple;" one whom therefore, by still better right, his servants might serve and be guiltless.\* He contemplates his disciples as already the priests of the New Covenant, of which he is himself the living Temple.† It was in their needful service and ministration to him, and because that so occupied them as that they had not time regularly to prepare food or to eat, that they were an hungered, (ver. 1,) and profaned, as the adversaries accounted it, the Sabbath. But if those who yet ministered in that temple which was but the shadow of the true, were thus privileged,—if, as every man's conscience bore witness, they were blameless in all this, and only seemingly transgressed the law, really to keep it, how much more those who ministered about the Temple not made with hands,—the true Tabernacle, which the Lord had pitched and not man?‡

The Lord continues: "But if ye had known," if with all your searching into the Scripture, all your busy scrutiny of its letter, you had ever so entered into the spirit of the Law, whereof you profess to be the jealous guardians and faithful interpreters, as to understand "what

to circumcision, which is higher, and therein you have right. But the cures which I accomplish are greater than circumcision itself: that is but receiving the seal of the covenant upon a single member; my cures are a making the entire man (*ὅλος ἄθροπος*) whole: Shall not the Sabbath then by much better right give place to these works of mine?"

\* Cocceius gives admirably the meaning here: Hoc argumentum urget contra tacitam exceptionem, nempe, discipulos Christi in agro non in templis fecisse opus non sacerdotale. Christus ostendit majorem templo hic esse, significans se Dominum templi esse. Mal. iii. 1; Jer. xi. 15. . . . Quemadmodum igitur sacerdotes licite fecerunt opera, quæ pertinebant ad cultum Dei ceremoniale; ita discipuli Christi licite fecerunt illa quæ necesse erat facere, ut servirent ipsi vero templo et Domino templi. The argument is in no way materially altered if we admit *μερίζω* instead of *μερίζω* into the text, as Lachmann has done, and as is generally agreed now to be the preferable reading. We have exactly in the same manner, (Matt. xii. 42,) *ὁὐκ ἐλάττω* Σάββατος *ὕψος* *ὕψος*.

† I know not whether there is a force in Augustine's remark (*Quæst. xvii. in Matth.*, qu. 10): Unum exemplum datum regie potestatis de David, alterum sacerdotale de iis qui per ministerium templi Sabbathum violant: ut multò minus ad ipsum exulsam Sabbatho spicuarum crimen pertineat, qui verus rex et verus sacerdos est, et ideo Dominus Sabbathi.

‡ Irenæus (*Con. Har.*, l. 4, c. 8, § 4): Per Legis verba suos discipulos excusans et significans heere sacerdotibus liberè agere. . . . Sacerdotes autem sunt omnes Domini Apostoli, qui neque agros neque domos hæreditant hic, sed semper altari et Deo servium.

this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless;" you would not have found fault with them in whom no true fault can be found. The quotation is from Hos. vi. 7, and leaves some ambiguity on the mind of an English reader; which would have been avoided by some such translation as this, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice,"\* the words themselves containing one of those prophetic glimpses of the Gospel, one of those slights cast upon the Law even during the time when the Law was in force,† an example of that "finding fault" with it which the apostle notes, (Heb. viii. 8,) whereby a witness was borne even to them that lived under it, however some may have refused to receive that witness, that it was not the highest thing, but that God had something better and higher in store for his people. The prophet of the Old Covenant is here anticipating the great apostle of the New, and saying with as clear a voice, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels . . . and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Cor. xiii. 1—3.) He is declaring, That which God longs for on the part of men is not the outward observance, the sacrifice in the letter, but the inward outpouring of love,—that which the "sacrifice" symbolized, the giving up of self in the self-devotion of love. (Cf. Heb. x. 5—10.) This must underlie every outward sacrifice and service to give it value; and when the question arises between the form and the spirit, so that the one can only be preserved by the loss of the other, then the form must yield to the life, as the meaner to the more precious.‡

But the application of the words in the present case still remains unsettled. For it may be either, "If you had truly understood what God

\* In the LXX., ελεος θέλω ἢ θυσίαν, καὶ ἐπίγνωσιν Θεοῦ, ἢ ὀλοκαυτώματα.

† Among those slights, God's words by Ezekiel, "Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live," (xx. 25,) are often enumerated; by Melancthon, by Reineccius, (Deus ne suæ quidem legi hunc honorem tribuit, quod mereatur vitam æternam,) and by many more. Yet this is certainly an error. Depreciating things as are spoken of the Old Covenant, yet this is ever relatively, and only in comparison with the New: never this absolute blame, (VIRINGA, *Obs. Sac.*, v. 1, p. 265; præcepta non bona, ἐν ἐμφάσει, in quibus nihil inerat boni.) The verse is to be explained by the verse ensuing, with which it stands in intimate connection. The "I gave" here, is but the παρέδωκεν αὐτοῦς ὁ Θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, of Rom. i. 26. Cf. Acts vii. 42; 2 Thess. ii. 11. These "statutes that were not good," were the heathen abominations to which God gave them over.

‡ Exactly in obedience to this precept, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," and with a true insight into the law of love, as the highest law of all, those holy men have acted, that in great needs have sold the most sacred vessels of the Church for the redemption of captives, or for the saving of perishing souls in some great famine.

asks of men, what service from them pleases him best, you would have understood that my disciples were offering that, who in true love and pity for perishing souls had so labored and toiled as to go without their necessary food, and were therefore thus obliged to satisfy the cravings of a present hunger,\*—that their loving transgression was better than many a man's cold and heartless clinging to the letter of the commandment." Or else the words may have more direct reference to the Pharisees themselves: "If you had understood the service wherein God delighted the most, you would have sought to please him by meekness and by mercy,—by a charitable judgment of your brethren,—by that love out of a pure heart, which to him 'is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' (Mark xii. 33.) Ye would not thus have been judges of evil thoughts." (Prov. xvii. 15.) Thus Olshausen,† who adds: "This merciful love was just what was wanting in the fault-finding of the Pharisees. It was no true bettering of the disciples which they desired; no pure zeal for the cause of God urged them on. Rather sought they out of envy and an inner bitterness to bring something against the disciples; and, in fact, out of this did, in an apparent zeal for the Lord, persecute the Lord in his disciples. They 'condemned the guiltless;' for the disciples had not out of *ennui*, for mere pastime's sake, plucked the ears, but out of hunger. (ver. 1.) Their own they had forsaken, and they hungered now in their labor for the kingdom of God. Therefore stood they in the same position as David the servant of God, who, in like manner, with them that were with him, hungered in the service of the Lord; as the priests, who in the temple must labor on the Sabbath, and so for the Lord's sake seem to break the law of the Lord. While this was so, *they* also might without scruple eat of the shewbread of the Lord: what was God's, that was theirs."

St. Mark has alone preserved for us the weighty words which follow, (ii. 27 :) "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." The end for which the Sabbath was ordained was to bless man; the end for which man was created, was not to observe the Sabbath. A principle is here laid down, which it is clearly impossible to confine to the Sabbath alone. Rather it must extend to the whole circle of outward ordinances. It does in fact say this, The Law was made for man; not man for the Law. Man is the end, and the ordinances of the Law the means; not these the end, and man the means.‡ Man was

\* So Maldonatus: Hoc est quod apostolos maximè excusabat, quod in prædicando et faciendis miraculis adeò fuissent occupati, ut nec parare cibum nec capere possent.

† In like manner Wolf (*Cura*, in loc.): Non dubitaverim . . . verba hæc opponi iudicio Pharisæorum inmiti et rigido, de discipulis tanquam violatoribus Sabbathi, rate.

‡ See a remarkable parallel 2 Macc. v. 19.

not made to the end that he might observe these ; but these were given, that they might bless man, that they might train and discipline him till he should be ready to serve God from the free impulses of his spirit.\* And all this being so, “therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.” Now to say here with Grotius, that “Son of man” is equivalent to man, and that the meaning of these words is, The Sabbath was made for man, and man therefore can do with it as he will, is evidently an error.† For, in the first place, there is no passage in the New Testament in which “Son of man,” occurring as it does eighty-eight times, does not mean the Messiah, *the* man in whom the idea of humanity was fully realized ; and, again, with all the bold things which St. Paul speaks of man’s relations to the Law, he never speaks of him, even after he is risen with Christ, as being its lord. He is not under it ; he is released from its rule, so that it is henceforth with him as a friendly companion, not as an imperious schoolmaster.‡ But it is God’s Law, and so long as he is still in the flesh, and therefore may continually need its restraints upon his flesh, he never stands above it ; rather, at the first moment of his falling away from the liberty of a service in Christ, will come under it anew.

Even the ceremonial law man is not lord of, to loose *himself* from it, as upon the plea of insight into the deeper mysteries which it shadows forth : he must wait a loosing from it at the hands from which it first proceeded, and which first imposed it. Simply as man, Christ himself was “made under the law.” (Gal. iv. 4.) But as Son of man, as the Messiah, who is also Son of God, he has power over all these outward ordinances : he himself first gave them for the training of man, as a preparatory discipline, and when they have done their work, when this preparatory discipline is accomplished, he may remove them ; he may say when the shadow shall give place to the substance, when his people so possess the last that they may forego the first. And it

\* Even in the Talmud it was said, “The Sabbath is in your hands, and you not in the hands of the Sabbath ; for it is written, The Lord hath *given you* the Sabbath. Exod. xvi. 29 ; Ezek. xx. 12.”

† See (*in loc.*) Grotius’s ingenious defence of his theory, which he confidently affirms is the only one which the connection of the words in St. Mark will allow : but Cocceius answers well, Non sequitur : Hominis causâ factum est Sabbatum : Ergo homo est Dominus Sabbati. Sed bene sequitur : Ergo is, cujus est homo, et qui propter hominem venit in mundum, quique omnem potestatem in cælo et terrâ possidet, in hominis salutem et bonum est et Dominus Sabbati. Ceterùm Dominus Sabbati non esset, nisi esset supremus *νομοθέτης*, et nisi ad ipsius gloriam pertineret Sabbati institutio, et ejus usus ad salutem hominis.

‡ He is not, to use Augustine’s distinction, *sub lege*, but he is *cum lege*, and *in lege*.

was the sign and augury that they had done their work, when he was come, in whom the highest gifts of God to men were given. The very fact that he was trusted with the highest, involved his power over all lower forms of teaching. Christ is "the end of the law,"—is every way the end, as that to which it pointed, as that in which it is swallowed up; being himself living law, not therefore in any true sense the destroyer of the law, as the adversaries charged him with being, but its transformer and glorifier, changing it from law into liberty, from shadow to substance, from letter to spirit.\*

To this our Lord's clearing of his disciples, or rather of himself in his disciples, (for the accusation was truly against him,) the healing of the man with a withered hand is attached immediately, as we have seen, by St. Matthew, although St. Luke shows us that it did not find place till the following Sabbath. Like another healing, very similar in its circumstances, that of the woman with the spirit of infirmity, (Luke xiii. 11,) like that too of the demoniac at Capernaum, (Mark i. 2, 3,) it was wrought in a synagogue. There, on the ensuing Sabbath, in "*their synagogue*," the synagogue of those with whom he had thus disputed, he encountered "*a man who had his hand withered*." St. Luke tells us that it was his "*right hand*" which was thus affected. The disease under which this man labored, and which probably extended throughout the whole arm, was one occasioned by a deficient absorption of nutriment in the limb; it was in fact a partial atrophy, showing itself in a gradual wasting of the size of the limb, with a loss of its powers of motion, and ending with its total death. When once thoroughly established, it is incurable by any art of man.†

The apparent variation in the different records of this miracle, that in St. Matthew the question proceeds from the Pharisees, in St. Mark and Luke from the Lord, is no real one;—the reconciliation of the two accounts is easy. The Pharisees first ask him, "*Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?*" He answers this question as was his wont, (see

\* Augustine (*Serm.* 136, 3): Dominus Sabbatum solvebat: sed non ideò reus. Quid est quod dixi, Sabbatum solvebat? Lux ipse venerat, umbras removebat. Sabbatum enim à Domino Deo præceptum est, ab ipso Christo præceptum, qui cum Patre erat, quando lex illa dabatur: ab ipso præceptum est, sed in umbrâ futuri.

† See WINEY'S *Real Wörterbuch*, v. 1, p. 796. In the apocryphal "Gospel according to the Hebrews," in use among the Nazarenes and Ebionites, which consisted probably of our St. Matthew, with some extraneous additions, this man appeared as a mason, and is introduced as thus addressing the Lord: Cæmentarius eram, manibus victum quæritans: precor te, Jesu, ut mihi restituas sanitatem, ne turpiter mendicem cibos. The χεῖρα ἔχων ξηραίν is equivalent to the τὴν χεῖρα ἀδρανῆς ὄν of Philostratus, (*Vita Apollon.*, l. 3, c. 39.) whom the Indian sages heal.

Matt. xxi. 24.) by another question. That this is such another counter-question comes out most plainly in St. Luke: "*I will ask you one thing. Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good or to do evil? to save life or destroy it?*" Our Lord with the same infinite wisdom which we admire in his answer to the question of the lawyer, "*Who is my neighbor?*" (Luke x. 29.) shifts the whole argument and lifts it altogether into a higher region, where at once it is seen on which side is the right and the truth. They had put the alternatives of doing or not doing; here there might be a question. But he shows that the alternatives are, doing good or failing to do good,—which last he puts as identical with doing evil, the neglecting to save as equivalent with destroying. Here there could be no question: this under no circumstances could be right; it could never be good to sin. Therefore it is not merely allowable, but a duty, to do some things on the Sabbath.\* "*Yea,*" he says, "*and things much less important and earnest than that which I am about to do, you would not leave undone. Which of you would not draw your sheep from the pit into which it had fallen on the Sabbath; and shall I, the true shepherd, not rescue a sheep of my fold, a man, that is far better than a sheep? Your own consciences tell you that that were a true Sabbath work; and how much worthier this? You have asked me, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? I answer, It is lawful to do well on that day, and therefore to heal.*" They can answer him nothing further, —"*they held their peace.*"

"*Then,*" that is, as St. Mark tells us, "*when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts,*

\* Danzius (in MEUSCHEN'S *N. T. ex Talm. illustr.*, p. 585): *Immutat ergo beneficium Servator omnem controversiæ statum, ac longè eundem rectius, quàm fraudis isti artifices, proponit.* The object of the interesting and learned Essay, *Christi Curatio Sabbathica vindicata ex legibus Judaicis*, from which the above quotation is made, is to prove by extracts from their own books that the Jews were not at all so strict, as now, when they wanted to find an accusation against the Lord, they professed to be, in the matter of the things permitted or prohibited on the Sabbath. He finds an indication of this (p. 607.) in our Saviour's words, "*Thou hypocrite,*" addressed on one of these occasions to the ruler of the synagogue. (Luke xiii. 15.) Of course the great difficulty in judging whether he has made out his point, is to know how far the extracts in proof, confessedly from works of a later, often a far later date, than the time of Christ, do fairly represent the earlier Jewish canons. The fixity of Jewish tradition is much in favor of the supposition that they do; but there always remains something in these proofs, which causes them to fail absolutely to prove. In the apocryphal gospels, as for instance in the *Evangelium Nicodemi*, (see THILO'S *Codex Apocryphus*, pp. 502, 558,) it is very observable how prominent a place among the accusations brought against Christ on his trial, are the healings wrought upon the Sabbath.

*saieth he to the man, Stretch forth thy hand.*” The existence of grief and anger together in the same heart is no contradiction: indeed, with him who was at once perfect love and perfect holiness, grief for the sinner must ever have gone hand in hand with anger against the sin; and this anger, which with us is ever in danger of becoming a turbid thing, of passing into anger against the man, who is God’s creature, instead of being anger against the sin, which is the devil’s corruption of God’s creature,—with him was perfectly pure; for it is not the agitation of the waters, but the sediment at the bottom, which troubles and defiles them, and where no sediment is, no impurity will follow on their agitation. The man obeyed the word, which was a word of power; he stretched forth his hand, “*and it was restored whole like as the other.*”

The madness of Christ’s enemies rises to the highest pitch; he had not merely broken their traditions, but he had put them to silence and to shame before all the people. Wounded pride, rancorous hate, were mingled with and exasperated their other feelings of evil will to him: “*They were filled with madness;*” (Luke vi. 11;) and in their blind hate they snatch at any weapon whereby they may hope to destroy him. They do not shrink from joining league with the Herodians, the Romanizing party in the land,—attached to Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, who was only kept on his throne by Roman influence,—if between them they may bring to nothing this new power which seems equally to threaten both. So, on a later occasion, (Matt. xxii. 16,) the same parties combine together to ensnare him. For thus it is with the world: it lays aside for the moment its mutual jealousies and enmities, to join in a common conspiracy against the truth. It is no longer a kingdom divided against itself when the kingdom of light is to be opposed. Herod and Pilate can be friends together, if it be for the destroying of the Christ. (Luke xxii. 12.) He meanwhile, aware of their machinations, withdraws himself from their malice to the neighborhood of the sea of Galilee.



## XX.

### THE WOMAN WITH A SPIRIT OF INFIRMITY.

LUKE xiii. 10—17.

WE have here another of our Lord's cures which, being accomplished on the Sabbath, awoke the indignation of the chief teachers of the Jewish Church; cures, of which many, though not all, are recorded chiefly for the sake of showing how the Lord dealt with these cavillers; and what he himself contemplated as the true hallowing of that day. This being the main point which the Evangelist has in his eye, every thing else falls into the background. We know not where this healing took place; we are merely told that it was "*in one of their synagogues.*" While there was but one temple in the land, and indeed but one for all the Jews in all the world, there were synagogues in every place: and in one of these Christ, as was often his wont, was teaching upon the Sabbath. Among those present there was a woman that was bent double, that had, in the words of St. Luke, "*a spirit of infirmity,*" which showed itself in this permanent and unnatural contraction of her body. Had we only these words, "*spirit of infirmity,*" we might be doubtful whether St. Luke meant to trace up her complaint to any other cause beyond the natural causes, whence flow the weaknesses and sufferings which afflict our race. But our Lord's later words concerning this woman,—"*whom Satan hath bound,*"—are more explicit, and leave no doubt of his meaning. Her calamity had a deeper root; she should be classed with those possessed by evil spirits, though the type of her possession was infinitely milder than that of most, as is shown by her permitted presence at the public worship of God. Her sickness, having its first seat in her spirit, had brought her into a moody melancholic state, of which the outward contraction of the muscles of her body, the inability to lift herself, was but the sign and the consequence.\*

\* This woman is often contemplated as the symbol of all those whom the poet addresses—

Our Lord did not here wait till his aid was sought, though it may be that her presence in that place was, on her part, a tacit seeking of his help,—as, indeed, seems implied in the words of the ruler of the synagogue, bidding the multitude upon other days than the Sabbath to “*come and be healed.*” Seeing her, he himself “*called her to him, and laid his hands on her,*”<sup>\*</sup>—those hands being here the channel by which the streams of his truer life, which was to dissolve those bonds, spiritual and bodily, whereby she was held, should flow into her,—saying at the same time, (for though recorded, as was necessary, one after another, we are to assume the words and imposition of hands as identical in time,) “*Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.*” And the effect followed the words and the hands laid on: “*immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.*” She glorified too, no doubt, the author of her salvation, and this was what the ruler of the synagogue could not bear, (cf. Matt. xxi. 15, 16,)—a “*hypocrite,*” as the Lord calls him,—zeal for

Oh curvæ in terras animæ !

For the erect countenance of man, in contrast with that downward bent of all other creatures, is the symbol impressed upon his outward frame, of his nobler destiny, of a heavenly hope with which they have nothing in common; which the poet, describing the gifts which God gave to man at his creation, has well expressed :

Os homini sublime dedit, cælumque tueri  
Jussit, et erectos in sidera tollere vultus :

and JUVENAL, *Sat.* 15, 142—147, in a yet nobler strain: compare PLATO'S *Timæus*, Stallbaum's ed., p. 360, and the derivation of ἄνωστροφος, namely, the *upward* looking, which some have suggested, is well known. On the other hand, the looks ever bent upon the ground are a natural symbol of a heart and soul turned earthward altogether, and wholly forgetful of their true home, and of man's good, which is not below but above him. Milton's fine use of this symbol in his description of Mammon (*Par. Lost*, b. 1) will readily occur :

Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell  
From heaven; for even in heaven his looks and thoughts  
Were always downward bent.

Thus Augustine (*Enarr. 2<sup>a</sup> in Ps. lxxviii. 24*): Qui bene audit, Sursum cor, curvum dorsum non habet. Erectâ quippe staturâ exspectat spem repositam sibi in cœlo . . . At verò qui futuræ vitæ spem non intelligunt, jam excecati, de inferioribus cogitant; et hoc est habere dorsum curvum, à quo morbo Dominus mulierem illam liberavit. Cf. *Enarr. in Ps. xxxvii. 7*; *Quæst. Evang.*, l. 2, qu. 29; AMBROSE, *Hexaem.*, l. 3, c. 12. Theophylact (in loc.): Ταῦτα δὲ μοι λήμβανε τὰ θαύματα καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἐντὸς ἀνθρώπων συγκύπτει γὰρ ψυχὴ ὅταν ἐπὶ τὰς γῆρας μόνας φροντίδας τεύῃ, καὶ μηδὲν οὐράνιον ἢ θεῶν φαντάζεται.

\* Chrysostom (in CRAMER'S *Catena*): Προσπειρώθητι δὲ καὶ χεῖρας αὐτῆς, ἵνα μάθωμεν ὅτι τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγον ἔνταυμά τε καὶ ἐνέργειαν ἡ ἁγία πέφόρηκε ἀρρῆξ.

God being but the cloak which he wore to hide, whether from others only, or, in a sadder hypocrisy, from his own heart also, his true hatred of all that was holy and divine.\* He was not, in fact, disturbed, because the Sabbath was violated, but because Christ was glorified. Therefore drew he down upon himself that sharp rebuke from him, whose sharpest rebuke was uttered only in love, and who would have torn, if that had been possible, from off this man's heart, the veil which was hiding his true self even from his own eyes. Another part of his falseness was, that not daring directly to find fault with the Lord, he seeks obliquely to reach him through the people, who were more under his influence, and whom he feared less. He takes advantage of his position as the interpreter of the Law and the oracles of God, and from "Moses' seat" would fain teach the people that this work done to the glory of God—this restoring of a human body and a human soul—his undoing the heavy burden—this unloosing the chain of Satan,—was a servile work, and one, therefore, forbidden on the Sabbath. Blaming them for coming to be healed, he indeed is thinking not of them, but means that rebuke to glance off on him who has put forth on this day his power to help and to save.

Every word of Christ's answer is significant. It is not a defence of his breaking the Sabbath, but a declaration that he has not broken it at all.† "You have your relaxations of the Sabbath strictness, required by the very nature and necessities of your earthly condition; you make no difficulty in the matter, where there is danger that loss would ensue, that your possessions would be perilled by the leaving some act undone. Your ox and your ass are precious in your sight, and you count it no violation of the day to lead them away to water. Yet is not a human soul more precious still? the loosing this as allowable as the loosing those?" Every word in his answer *tells*. "Each one of you, whatever your scheme and theory may be concerning the strictness with which the Sabbath ought to be kept, disciples of Hillel or disciples of Schammai, you loose your beasts; yet ye will not that I should loose a human spirit—one who is of more value than many oxen and asses;—and this you do, though they have not been tied up for more than for some brief space; while, in your thoughts, I may not unloose from the thralldom of

\* Augustine (*Enarr. 2<sup>a</sup> in Ps. lxxviii. 24*): Bene scandalizati sunt de illâ erectâ, ipsi curvi. And again (*Serm. 392, c. 1*): Calumniabantur autem erigenti, qui, nisi curvi?

† Tertullian (*Adv. Marc., l. 4, c. 30*): Unusquisque vestrûm sabbatis non solvit asinum aut bovem suum à præsepi et ducit ad potum? Ergo secundùm conditionem legis operatus, legem confirmavit, non dissolvit, jubentem nullum opus fieri, nisi quod fieret omni animæ, quantò potius humanæ. Cf. IRENÆUS, *Con. Hær., l. 4, c. 8*.

Satan this captive of eighteen years.\* Yours, moreover, is a long process of unfastening and leading away to water,—which yet, (and rightly,) you make no difficulty about; but ye are offended with me who have spoken but a word and released a soul.”† There lies at the root of this argument, as of so much else in Scripture, a deep assertion of the specific difference between man, the lord of the creation, for whom all things were made, and all the inferior orders of beings that tread the same earth with him, and with whom upon the side of his body he is akin. He is something more than the first in this chain and order of beings; he is specifically different. (Cf. 1 Cor. ix. 9. “Doth God take care of oxen?” and Ps. viii. 8.) And more than merely this: the woman was a “*daughter of Abraham.*” Some think here that the Lord means to magnify her claim to this benefit, as being an heir of the faith of Abraham,—one, indeed, who, for the saving of her soul in the day of the Lord, had come for some sin under the scourge of Satan and this long and sore affliction of the flesh. Yet it is more probable that he means but this, that she was one of the chosen race, a daughter of Abraham after the flesh,—however, after this healing, she may have become something more, a child of the faith of Abraham.‡

\* Ambrose (*Exp. in Luc.*, l. 7, c. 175): Vinculum vinculo comparat. . . . Cùm ipsi animalibus Sabbato solvunt vincula, reprehendunt Dominum, qui homines à peccatorum vinculis liberavit.

† Chemnitz (*Harm. Evang.*, c. 112): Tempus etiam inter se confert. Jumenta fortassis ad noctem unam aut paucos dies præsepi alligantur. At verò hæc fœmina vel saltem ob temporis prolixitatem omnium commiseratione dignissima est.

‡ In a sermon on the Day of the Nativity (*Serm. Inedd.*, p. 33.) Augustine makes the following application of this history: Inclinauit se, cùm sublimis esset, ut nos qui incurvati eramus, erigeret. Incurvata siquidem erat humana natura ante adventum Domini, peccatorum onere depressa; et quidem se in peccati vitium spontaneâ voluntate curvaverat, sed sponte se erigere non valebat. . . . Hæc autem mulier formam incurvationis totius humani generis præferebat. In hâc muliere hodie natus Dominus noster vinculis Satane alligatos absolvit, et licentiam nobis tribuit ad superna conspiciere, ut qui olim constituti in miseriis tristes ambulabamus, hodie venientem ad nos medicum suscipientes, nimirum gaudeamus.

## XXI.

### THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A DROPSY.

LUKE xiv. 1—6.

ALL which is most remarkable in the circumstances of this miracle has been already anticipated in others, as especially in the two immediately preceding, to which the reader is referred. Our Lord, not even at this late period of his ministry treating the Pharisees as wholly and finally hardened against the truth, but still seeking to win, if it were possible, them also for his kingdom, had accepted the invitation of one of the chief among them “to eat bread” in his house. This was upon the Sabbath, the day which the Jews ordinarily selected for their festal meals: for the idea of the Sabbath among the Jews was not at all that of a day to be austere kept, but very much the contrary. The practical abuses of it were the turning it into a day of rioting and excess.\* But the invitation, though accepted in love, yet seems not to have been given in good faith, but in the hope that the nearer and more accurate watching of the Lord’s words and ways, which such an opportunity would give, might afford some new matter of accusation against him.† Such was, probably, the spring of the apparent courtesy which they showed him now, and so did they reverence the sacred laws of hospitality.‡

It has been suggested that the man with a dropsy was of design placed where he was, since he would scarcely without permission have found entrance into a private house. But although it is quite conceiva-

\* On the abuses in this kind of the Jewish Sabbath at a later day, see AUGUSTINE, *Enarr. in Ps. xci. 1*, and 2<sup>a</sup> *in Ps. xxxii. 2*, and *Serm. 9, c. 3*.

† The emphasis, however, which Hammond finds in the *καὶ αὐτοὶ*, even they that had invited him did treacherously watch him,—as though the Evangelist would bring into notice the violation here of the laws of hospitality, is questionable. Such a superabounding use of *καὶ* is not unusual in St. Luke.

‡ Ἦσαν παρατηρούμενοι. For a similar use of *παρατηρεῖν*, compare vi. 7; xx. 20; Mark iii. 2; Dan. vi. 11.

ble of these malignant adversaries of Christ, that they should have laid such a snare for him as this, yet there is nothing in the narration to give it likelihood here; and the difficulty that, without such design, the man would scarcely have found his way into the house of the Pharisee, rests upon an ignorance of the almost public life of the East, and a forgetting how easily in a moment of high excitement, such as this must have been, the feeble barriers which the conventional rules of society would oppose might be broken through. (Luke vii. 36, 37.) At any rate, if there was such a plot, the man himself was no party to it; for the Lord “took him, and healed him, and let him go.”

Yet, ere he did this, he justified the work which he would accomplish, as more than once he had justified other similar works of grace and love wrought upon the Sabbath, saying to these interpreters of the Law, “*Is it lawful to heal upon the Sabbath?*” Here, as in so many matters of debate, it only needs for the question to be truly put, to be once rightly stated, and the answer at once is given; all is so clear, that the possibility of its remaining a question any longer has for ever vanished.\* As was the case before, he obtains no answer from them,—for they will not approve, and they cannot gainsay. “As on other occasions, (Matt. xii. 11; Luke xiii. 15,) the Lord brings back those present to their own experience, and lets them feel the keen contradiction in which their blame of Christ’s free work of love sets them with themselves, in that, where their worldly interests were at hazard, they did that very thing whereof they made now an occasion against him.”† We may observe, that as in that other case where the woman was *bound*, he adduces the example of *unbinding* a beast, (Luke xiii. 15,)—so in this, where the man was dropsical, suffering, that is, from water, the example he adduces has its equal fitness.‡ “You grudge that I should deliver this man upon this day from the water that is choking him, yet if the same danger from water threatened one of your beasts, *an ass or an ox*,§ you would make no scruple of extricating it on the Sabbath from

\* Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 12): Adimplevit enim et hic legem, dum conditionem interpretatur ejus, dum operum differentiam illuminat, dum facit quæ Lex de Sabbati feriis excipit, dum ipsum Sabbati diem benedictione Patris à primordio sanctum, benefactione suâ efficit sanctiorem, in quò scilicet divina præsidia ministrabat.

† OLSHAUSEN.

‡ So Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.*, l. 2, c. 29): Congruenter hydropicum animali quod cecidit in puteum, comparavit: humore enim laborabat; sicut et illam mulierem quam decem et octo annis alligatam dixerat . . . comparavit junento quod solvitur ut ad aquam ducatur. Grotius: Hydropicum submergendæ pecudi, ut τὴν συγκόπτουσαι pecudi vinctæ, comparavit.

§ There are very considerable authorities for, instead of ὄνος, reading *βίος*, which

the dangers which threatened it ; how much then is a man better than a beast ?” “ *And they could not answer him again to these things ;*” they were silenced, that is, but not convinced. The truth, which did not win them, did that which alone else it could do, exasperated them the more : and they replied nothing, biding their time. (See Matt. xii. 14.)

Mill and Wetstein favor, and which Chrysostom (see CRAMER'S *Catena*, in *loc.*) appears to have read in his copy ; yet the internal connection seems decisive in favor of the other reading. Christ is arguing from the less to the greater : “ You will save a comparatively worthless beast, do you murmur when I save a man ?” We have the ox and the ass set together as liable to this accident of falling into a pit, Exod. xxi. 33.

## XXII.

### THE CLEANSING OF THE TEN LEPERS.

LUKE xvii. 11—19.

THE Jews that dwelt in Galilee very commonly in their necessary journeys to the feasts at Jerusalem took the longer route, which led them across the Jordan, and through the region of Peræa, the Gilead of the Old Testament, that so they might avoid the vexations and annoyances and even worse outrages which they sometimes met in passing through the unfriendly land of the Samaritans.\* For these, always unfriendly, would naturally be most unfriendly of all to those that were travelling up to the great feasts of the holy city, and were thus giving witness in act against the will-worship of Mount Gerizim, and the temple of Samaria in which no presence of God dwelt. It is generally understood that now, despite these vexations and the discomforts of that inhospitable route. (see Luke ix. 51—56; John iv. 9.) our Lord, with the band of his disciples, on this his last journey to the holy city, took the directer and shorter way which led him straight from Galilee through the midst of Samaria to Jerusalem. It is certain that the words of the original *may* bear this meaning, yet not the less I should understand the Evangelist to say that the Lord passed *between* these two regions, having, that is, one on his right hand, the other on his left, and skirting them both. This explains the mention of Samaria first, which in the ordinary explanation of the words is almost inexplicable. The Lord travelled due eastward towards Jordan, having Galilee on his left hand, and Samaria, which is therefore first named, on his right: and on reaching the river, he either passed over it at Scythopolis, where we know there was a bridge, recrossing the river near Jericho,† or kept on the

\* Josephus (*Antt.*, l. 20, c. 6, § 1) gives an account of the massacre by the Samaritans of a great number of Galilean pilgrims, which happened a little later than this.

† So Weistien: Non viâ rectâ et brevissimâ a septentrione versus meridiem per



western bank till he reached that city, where presently we find him. (xviii. 35.)

“*And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men, that were lepers.*” Their common misery had drawn them together; (2 Kin. vii. 3;) nay, had even caused them to forget the fierce national antipathy which reigned between Jew and Samaritan. In this border land too it was more natural than elsewhere that they should find themselves in one company, and thus a Samaritan had found admission into this forlorn assembly. There has been already occasion to speak of the nature and meaning of leprosy in the Law of Moses; that it was the outward symbol of sin in its deepest malignity,—of sin therefore as involving entire separation from God; not of spiritual sickness only, but spiritual death, since absolute separation from the one fountain of life must needs be no less. These lepers, in obedience to the commandment, “*stood afar off;*” and out of a deep sense of their misery, yet not without hope that a Healer was at hand, “*lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master,\* have mercy on us!*” They were now in earnest to receive the mercy, however at a later period they were slack in giving thanks for it.

Wonderful is it and most instructive to observe the differences in our Lord’s dealing with the different sufferers and mourners that are brought in contact with him; how the Physician, who is all wisdom and all tenderness, varies his treatment for the varying needs of his patients; how he seems to resist a strong faith, that he may make it stronger yet; how he meets a weak faith, lest it should prove altogether too weak in the trial; how one he forgives first, and heals after; and another, whose heart could only be softened by first receiving an earthly benefit, he first heals and then pardons. There is here, too, no doubt a reason why these ten are dismissed as yet uncleansed, and bidden to go show themselves to the priests; while that other, whose healing was before recorded, is first cleansed, and not till afterwards bidden to present himself in the temple. Doubtless there was here a keener trial of their faith. While as yet there were no signs of restoration upon them, they were bidden to do that, which implied they were perfectly cleansed, to take a journey, which would have been ridiculous, a labor in vain, unless Christ’s words and promise proved true. In their prompt going

Samariticam regionem iter fecit, sed cum confinia Samariæ et Galilææ venisset, ab itinere deflexit versus orientem, ita ut Samariam ad dextram, Galilæam ad sinistram haberet; et Jordanem Scythopoli, ubi pons erat, videtur transiisse, et juxta ripam Jordanis in Peræâ descendisse, donec e regione Jerichuntis iterum trajiceret.

\* Ἐπιστάτα. The word is peculiar to St. Luke (v. 5; viii. 24, 45; ix. 33, 49.) It is instead of the κέρει of St. Matthew.

was an evident proof that there were in them weak beginnings of faith, though these, in the greater number, came to nothing, and brought no fruit to perfection.\* For they could not have thought that they were sent to the priests as though these should heal them, since they must have well known that it was no part of the priests' functions to cure, but only to declare cured; that these cleansed, not in the sense of ridding men of their disease; but, when their sickness had disappeared, restoring them with ceremonial washings and offerings to the fellowship of the congregation. There was also here a greater temptation to ingratitude. When they first felt and found their benefit, their benefactor was not immediately before them, so that it should be an easy thing, a costless effort, to return thanks to him: but they were, probably, already out of his sight, and some little way upon their journey; † we know not *how* far, for we are only told, that "*as they went ‡ they were cleansed.*"

Some, indeed, suppose that this returning of the Samaritan to give thanks, did not take place till after he had accomplished all which was commanded him; that he had been at Jerusalem—that he had offered his gift—that he had been pronounced clean—and, this his first duty accomplished, that he returned to render due thanks to his benefactor; and that so the sacred narrative leaps over a large space of time and many intermediate events for the purpose of connecting together the beginning and the end of this history. § But certainly the impression

\* Calvin: *Quamvis enim fetidam adhuc seabiem in carne suâ conspiciant, simul tamen ac jussi sunt se ostendere sacerdotibus, parere non detrectant. Adde quod nunquam, nisi fidei impulsu, profecti essent ad sacerdotes: ridiculum enim fuisset ad testandam suam munditiam, lepræ judicibus se offere, nisi pluris illis fuisset Christi promissio, quam præsens morbi sui intuitus. Visibilem in carne suâ lepram gestant, unico tamen Christi verbo confisi mundos se profiteri non dubitant: negari igitur non potest eorum cordibus insitum fuisse aliquod fidei semen . . . Quo magis timendum est, ne et nobis contingat scintillas fidei in nobis micantes extinguere.*

† Calvin gives another reason, besides the trouble, why they did not return: *Ut morbi memoriam extinguerent furtim elapsi sunt.*

‡ We learn from Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.*, l. 4, c. 35.) that the Gnostic Marcion saw in this healing of the lepers by the way, this taking, upon Christ's part, of the work out of the hands of the Levitical priests, a slight cast, and intended to be cast, by him on the Mosæ institutions: *He Christum æmulum [Legis] affirmat prævenientem solemnia Legis etiam in curatione decem leprosum, quos tantummodo ire jussu ut se ostenderent sacerdotibus, in itinere, purgavit, sine tacta jam et sine verbo, tacitâ potestate, et sola voluntate; and agam, Quasi Legis illusor, ut in itinere curatis ostenderet nihil esse Legem eum ipsis sacerdotibus.* It is needless to observe that there was no taking of the work out of their hands, since the work of the priests was not to cleanse, but to pronounce clean.

§ This is Calvin's view, although he is not strong on it: *Mihi tamen magis probabile est, non nisi audito sacerdotis judicio ad gratias agendas venisse . . . Nisi fortè*

which the narrative leaves is different;—that, having advanced some very little way on their commanded journey, so little that no time would have been really lost by the return, perhaps in the very village itself, they perceived what had taken place in them—that they were healed; and then this one returned in the fulness of a grateful heart to give glory to God, and thanks to his great Healer and Saviour; like the Syrian Naaman, who when delivered from the same disease, came back with all his company, beseeching the man of God to take a blessing at his hands; (2 Kin. v. 15;) the others meanwhile enduring to carry away the benefit without one thankful acknowledgment rendered unto him who was its author and its source, and to whose feet the slightest labor would have brought them. A sin only too common! for as Bishop Sanderson says, with allusion to their former crying: “We open our mouths wide till he open his hand; but after, as if the filling of our mouths were the stopping of our throats, so are we speechless and heartless.”\*

It gives a special significance to this miracle, and to its place in the Gospel of St. Luke, the Gospel for the heathen, that this thankful one should have been no other than a Samaritan, a stranger therefore by birth to the covenants of promise, while the nine unthankful were of the seed of Abraham. Thus there spoke out in this circumstance that the Gentiles, (for this Samaritan was no better,) were not excluded from the kingdom of God, nay, rather might find a place in it before others who by nature and birth were children of the kingdom; that the ingratitude of these might exclude them, while the faith of those might give to them an abundant entrance into all its blessings.

Even the Saviour himself, who knew what was in man, who had already had so many proofs of the ingratitude of men, seems to have marvelled here: for he asks, “*Were there not ten cleansed?† but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.*” Him he dismisses with a new and a better blessing; the first had reached but to the healing of his body, and that he had in common with the unthankful nine; but gratitude for a lower mercy obtains for him a higher, a peculiar blessing, which is singularly his, which reaches not merely to the springs of bodily health, but to the very fountains of his spiritual being. These also are healed; that which the

magis placet diversa conjectura, simul ac mundatum se vidit, antequam testimonium expeteret à sacerdotibus, ad ipsum auctorem pio et sancto ardore correptum venisse, ut sacrificium suum à gratiarum actione inciperet.

\* Bernard: Importuni ut accipiant, inquieti donec acceperint, ubi acceperint ingrati. Calvin: Sic inopia et esuries fidem gignit, quam occidit saturitas.

† Or rather, “Were not *the ten* (οἱ δέκα) cleansed?”

others missed, to which their bodily healing should have led them up, he has obtained; for to him and to him only it is said, "*Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.*"\*

It is difficult not to be struck with the aptness of the image which this history supplies, to set forth the condition of the faithful in this world. They are to take Christ's word that they will be cleansed. In Baptism is the pledge and promise and the initial act of it all. And they are to believe this, while they yet feel in themselves the leprous taint of sin,—to go forward in faith, being confident that in the use of his Word, and of his Sacraments, slight as they may seem to meet and overcome such mighty mischiefs, they will find that health, which according to the sure word of promise is already theirs; and as they go, believing this word, using these means, they *are* healed. And for them, too, a warning is here—that they forget not the purging of their old sins—nor what those sins were, how hideous, how loathsome; in this way sinning like these nine, who perhaps did not return because they would fain have obliterated the very memory of the fact that they had ever been those lepers. There is a warning here for the spiritually cleansed, that they keep in memory the times of their past anguish of soul,—the times when every thing seemed defiled to them, and they to every thing; when they saw themselves as "unclean, unclean," shut out from all holy fellowship of God and man, and cried out in their anguish, "*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us,*"—a warning to them that now they are at peace, they forget not the time of their trouble, but that the remembrance of the absolving cleansing word which was spoken to them then, with each new consciousness of a realized deliverance from the power of sin, bring them to the Saviour's feet, giving glory to God by him; lest failing in this, they be worse than even these unthankful nine. For they carried away only temporal mercies unacknowledged; but we should in that case be seeking to carry away spiritual; though that never could truly be, since the spiritual mercy which is not evermore

\* Calvin: *Serrandi* verbum quidam interpretes ad carnis munditiam restringunt; verum si ita est, quum vivam in hoc Samaritano fidem commendet Christus, quæri potest quomodo servati fuerint alii novem; nam eadem promissuè omnibus sanitas obtigit. Sic ergo habendum est Christum hic aliter asimâsse donum Dei quàm soleant profani homines, nempe tanquam salutare paterni amoris symbolum vel pignus. Sanati fuerunt novem leprosi, sed quia Dei gratiam impiè obliterant, ipsam sanitatem inficit et contaminat eorum ingratitudo, ut quam decebat utilitatem ex eâ non percipiant. Sola igitur fides dona Dei nobis sanctificat, ut pura sint, et cum legitimo usa conjuncta in salutem nobis cedant. . . Servatus est suâ fide Samaritanus. Quomodo? certè non ideo tantum, quod à leprâ curatus sit (nam hoc et reliqui commune erat), sed quia in numerum filiorum Dei acceptus est, ut paterni amoris tesseram ex ejus manu acciperet.

referred to its author, does sooner or later inevitably cease from him who would seek on any other condition to retain it.\*

\* Chemnitz (*Harm. Evang.*, c. 125): Remittit nos Filius Dei ad ministerium Verbi et Sacramentorum in Ecclesiâ; et quemadmodum hi sanati sunt dum iverunt, et mandato Christi obtemperarunt, ita et nos dum in Ecclesiâ Verbum Dei audimus, absolutione et Sacramentis utimur, vult nobis Christus peccata remittere, nos sanare, ut in cœlesti Jerusalem mundi coram Deo compareamus . . . Omnes nati sumus filii iræ, in baptismo remittitur nobis ille reatus, sed non statim in cœlos abripimur: verùm dicit nobis Ite, ostendite vos sacerdotibus. Leve quid ut videtur injungit. Utut autem leve sit, sequitur tamen enarrabile bonum, quia is qui nobis hoc præcipit, est omnipotens Deus, qui ex minimis maxima producere potest. Cf. AUGUSTINE, *Quæst. Evang.*, l. 2, c. 40.

## XXIII.

### THE HEALING OF THE DAUGHTER OF THE SYRO-PHENICIAN WOMAN.

MATT. xv. 21—28; MARK vii. 24—30.

It is not probable that our blessed Lord actually overpassed the limits of the Jewish land, now or at any other moment of his earthly ministry; though when it is said that he “*departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon,*” this may seem at first to favor such a supposition. St. Mark, however, tells us that he only “*went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon,*” and the true meaning which even St. Matthew’s words will abundantly bear, is, that he came into the confines of that heathen land.\* The general fitness of things, and more especially his own words on this very occasion, “*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel,*” would make it extremely unlikely that he had now brought his healing presence into a heathen land; and, moreover, when St. Matthew speaks of the “*woman of Canaan*” as *coming out* of that district, “*of the same coasts,*” he clearly shows that he has no other intention than to describe the Lord as having drawn close to the skirts of that profane land.

Being there, he “*entered into a house, and would have no man know it:*” but as the ointment bewrayeth itself, so he whose Name is like ointment poured out, “*could not be hid;*” and among those attracted by its sweetness, was a woman of that country,—“*a woman of Canaan,*” as St. Matthew terms her. “*a Greek, a Syrophenician.*” as St. Mark,†

\* Kuinoel here: In partes Palestinæ regioni Tyriorum et Sidoniorum finitimas. So Exod. xvi. 35, εἰς μίχους τῆς Φινικίας (LXX.) “to the borders of Canaan.”

† Συροφουίνισσα the best manuscripts have; so Lachmann; and not Συροφοίνισσα, which indeed were the more Greek form, yet not therefore here to be preferred, but rather the contrary. See a learned note in Grotius, on Matt. xv. 22. This woman’s name, according to the *Clementine Homilies* (l. 2, c. 19), was Justa, where legends of her later life, and her transition from heathenism to Judaism, are to be found.

meaning by the first term to describe her religion, that it was not Jewish but heathen ; by the second, the stock of which she came, which was even that accursed stock which God had once doomed to a total excision, but of which some branches had been spared by those first generations of Israel that should have extirpated them root and branch. Every thing, therefore, was against her ; yet she was not hindered by that every thing from coming and craving the boon that her soul longed after. She had heard of the mighty works which the Saviour of Israel had done : for already his fame had gone through all Syria ; so that they brought unto him, besides other sick, “ those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and he healed them.” (Matt. iv. 24.) And she has a boon to ask for her daughter, or rather indeed for herself, for so entirely had she made her daughter’s misery her own, that she comes saying, “ *Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David ; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil ;*” as on a later occasion the father of the lunatic child, “ *Have compassion on us, and help us.*” (Mark ix. 22.)

But very different she finds him from that which report had described him to her ; for that spoke of him as the merciful Son of man, who would not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, who encouraged every weary and afflicted soul to come and find rest with him. He who of himself came to meet the needs of others, withdrew himself from hers ; “ *He answered her not a word.*” In the language of Chrysostom, “ The Word has no word ; the fountain is sealed ; the physician withholds his remedies ;” until at last the disciples, wearied out with her long entreaties, and seemingly more merciful than their Lord, themselves come to him, making intercession for her that he would grant to her her petition and send her away. Yet was there in truth the worm of selfishness at the root of this seemingly greater compassion of theirs, and it shows itself when they give their reason why he should dismiss her with the boon she asks : “ *For she crieth after us ;*” she is making a scene ; she is drawing on us unwelcome observation. Theirs is one of those heartless grantings of a request, whereof we all are conscious ; when it is granted out of no love to the suppliant, but to leave undisturbed the peace and selfish ease of him from whom at length it is extorted,—such as his who said, “ *Lest by her continual coming she weary me.*” Here, as so often, under a seeming severity lurks the real love, while selfishness hides itself under the mask of bounty. But these intercessors meet with no better fortune than the suppliant herself ; and Christ stops their mouth with words unpromising enough for her suit : “ *I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*” (Cf. Matt. x. 5, 6.)

But in what sense was this true? All prophecy which went before declared that in him, the promised Seed, not one nation only, but all nations of the earth, should be blest: he himself declared, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice." (John x. 16.) It has happened indeed with others, as with the founders of false religions, that as success increased, the circle of their vision has widened; and they who meant at first but to give a faith to their nation, have aspired at last to give one to the world. But here all must have been known: the world-embracing reach of his faith was contemplated by Christ from the first. In what sense then, and under what limitations, could it be said with truth that he was not sent but unto Israel only? Clearly in his own personal ministry.\* That, for wise purposes in the counsels of God, was to be confined to his own nation; and every departure from this was, and was clearly marked as, an exception. Here and there, indeed, he gave preludes of the coming mercy;† yet before the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy, Christ was first to be "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." (Rom. xv. 8, 9.) It was only as it were by a rebound from them that the grace was to light upon the heathen world; while yet that issue which seemed thus accidental, was laid deep in the deepest counsels of God. (Acts xiii. 44—49; Rom. xi.) In the form of Christ's reply, as St. Mark gives it, "*Let the children first be filled,*" the refusal does not appear so absolute and final, and a glimpse appears of the manner in which the blessing will pass on to others, when as many of these, of "*the children,*" as will, have accepted it. But there, too, the *present* repulse is absolute: the time is not yet; others intermeddle not with the meal, till the children have had enough.

The woman hears the repulse, which the disciples who had ventured to plead for her, receive; but she is not daunted or disheartened thereby. Hitherto she had been crying after the Lord, and at a distance; but now, instead of being put further still, "*came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.*" And now he breaks the silence

\* Augustine (*Serm.* 77, c. 2): *Hic verborum istorum oritur questio: Unde nos ad ovile Christi de gentibus venimus, si non est missus nisi ad oves quæ perierunt domûs Israel? Quid sibi vult hujus secreti tam alta dispensatio, ut cum Dominus sciret quare veniret, utique ut Ecclesiam haberet in omnibus Gentibus, non se missum dixerit, nisi ad oves quæ perierunt domûs Israel? Intelligimus ergo præsentiam corporis sui, natiuitatem suam, exhibitionem miraculorum, virtutemque resurrectionis in illo populo eum ostendere debuisse. Jerome (*Comm. in Matth.*, in loc.): *Perfectam salutem gentium passionis et resurrectionis tempore reservabat.**

† Calvin: *Præluia quædam dare voluit communis misericordiæ.*



which hitherto he has maintained toward her ; but it is with an answer more uncomfortable than was the silence itself : “ *He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread,\* and to cast it to dogs.*” “ *The children*” are, of course, the Jews, “ *the children of the kingdom.*” (Matt. viii. 12.) He who spoke so sharply to them, speaks thus honorably of them ; nor is there any contradiction in this : for here he is speaking of the position which God has given them in his kingdom ; there, of the manner in which they have realized that position. On the other hand, extreme contempt was involved in the title of dog† given to any one, it being remarkable that the nobler characteristics of the animal, which yet were not unknown to antiquity, are never brought out in Scripture. (See Deut. xxxii. 18 ; Job xxx. 1 ; 1 Sam. xvii. 43 ; xxiv. 15 ; 2 Sam. iii. 8 ; ix. 8 : xvi. 9 ; 2 Kin. viii. 13 ; Matt. vii. 6 ; Phil. iii. 2 ; Rev. xxii. 15.)

This at length would have been enough for many ; and, even if they had persevered thus far, now at least they would have gone away in anger or despair. But not so this woman ; she, like the centurion, and under still more unfavorable circumstances than his, was mighty in faith ; and from the very word which seemed to make most against her, with the ready wit of faith, she drew an argument in her own favor. She entangled the Lord, himself most willing thus to be so entangled, in his own speech ; she takes the sword out of his own hand, with that sword to overcome him :‡ “ *Truth, Lord : yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.*” Upon these words Luther, who has dwelt on all the circumstances of this little history with a peculiar love, and seems never weary of extolling the mighty faith of this woman, ex-

\* Maldonatus : Habent canes panem suum minùs delicatum, quàm filii ; res naturales, Sol, Luna, pluvia, et cetera idem genus canum, id est Gentilium, panis sunt ; quæ providentiâ quidem Dei, sed generali minùsque accuratâ dispensantur, et omnibus in commune, sicut porcis glandes, projiciuntur : Evangelica gratia, quæ supra naturam est, panis est filiorum non projiciendus temerè, sed majore consilio rationeque distribuendus.

† Many as Maldonatus assume that there is yet a further aggravation of the contempt in the *κυνάριας* (the Vulgate, catellis), not even dogs, but whelps. Yet rather I should be inclined to say with Olshausen that there is in the diminutive a slight mitigation of the exceeding sharpness of the words ; yet not so but that they remain most severe and cutting still. Calvin brings out well the force of the *βαλεῖν*. *Projiciendi* verbo utitur significando non bene locari, quod Ecclesiæ Dei ablatum profanis hominibus vulgatur. Clarius exprimitur consilium Christi apud Marcum v. 27, ubi habetur, Sine prius saturari filios. Nam Cananæam admonet præposterè facere, quæ velut in mediâ cœnâ in mensam involat.

‡ Corn. à Lapide ; Christum suis verbis irretit, comprehendit, et capit. Rationem contra se factam in ipsum leniter retorquet.

claims, "Was not that a master-stroke? she snares Christ in his own words." And oftentimes he sets this Canaanitish woman before each troubled and fainting heart, that it may learn from her how to wring a Yea from God's Nay; or rather, how to hear the deep-hidden Yea, which many times lies in his seeming Nay. "Like her, thou must give God right in all he says against thee, and yet must not stand off from praying, till thou overcomest as she overcame, till thou hast turned the very charges made against thee into arguments and proofs of thy need,—till thou too hast taken Christ in his own words."

Our translation of the woman's answer is not, however, altogether satisfactory. For indeed she consents to Christ's declaration, not immediately to make exception against the conclusion which she draws from it, but to show how *in that very declaration* is involved the granting of her petition.\* "Saidest thou *dogs*? it is well; I accept the title and the place: for the dogs have a portion of the meal,—not the first, not the children's portion, but a portion still,—the crumbs which fall from the table. In this very statement of the case thou bringest us heathen, thou bringest *me*, within the circle of the blessings which God, the great householder, is ever dispensing to his family. We also belong to his household, though we occupy but the lowest place in it. According to thine own showing, I am not wholly an alien, and therefore I will abide by this name, and will claim from thee all its consequences." By the "*masters*" she does not mean the Jews, which is Chrysostom's mistake; for thus the whole image would be disturbed; they are "*the children*:" but by the *masters*," she would signify God, using the plural on account of the plural "*dogs*," which Christ had used before; in the same way as Christ himself says, "Then the *sons* are free," (Matt. xvii. 29,) having spoken plurally before of "the *kings* of the earth," while yet it is only the

\* There is nothing adversative in *καὶ γὰρ* = etenim (see Passow), which would justify the "yet" of our version, or the "nevertheless" of Tyndale's. Wiclif's Crammer's, the Genevese, and Rhemish versions have the right translation; thus the Genevese, "Truth, Lord, *for indeed* the whelps eat of the crumbs;" in this following the Vulgate. Etiam, Domine, *nam et* catelli edunt. So De Wette: Ya, Herr! denn es essen ya die Hunde. Maldonatus, always acute, and whose merits as an interpreter, setting apart his bitter polemical spirit, deserve the highest recognition, has exactly caught the meaning of her reply: Hoc est quod volo, me esse canem, *nam et* catelli comedunt de micis quæ cadunt de mensâ dominorum suorum. The "*crumbs*" here alluded to are something more than that which should accidentally fall from the table; for it was the custom during eating to use, instead of a napkin, the soft white part of the bread (*ἡ ἀσπιδίτις*), which, having thus used, they threw to the dogs. Eustathius Ἡ ἀσπιδίτις ἀνομιματίζουσα, εἶτα κενεῖ τοῦ αἵματος. (See BLOKER'S *Charikles*, v. 1. p. 431)

one Son, the only-begotten of the Father, whom he has in his eye.\* He, the great Master and Lord, spreads a table, and all that depend on him, in their place and order are satisfied from it,—the children at the table, the dogs beneath the table. There is in her statement something like the Prodigal's petition, "Make me as one of thy hired servants,"—a recognition of diverse relations, some closer, some more distant, in which divers persons stand to God,—yet all blest, who, whether in a nearer or remoter station, are satisfied from his hands.

And now she has conquered. She who before heard only those words of a seeming contempt, now hears words of a most gracious commendation,—words of which the like are recorded as spoken but to one other in all the Gospel history; "*O woman, great is thy faith!*" He who at first seemed as though he would have denied her the smallest boon, now opens to her the full treasure-house of his grace, and bids her to help herself, to carry away what she will: "*Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*" He had shown to her for a while, like Joseph to his brethren, the aspect of severity; but, like Joseph, he could not maintain it long,—or rather he would not maintain it an instant longer than it was needful, and after that word of hers, that mighty word of an undaunted faith, it was needful no more: in the words of St. Mark, "*For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.*"

Like the centurion at Capernaum, like the nobleman at Cana, she made proof that his word was potent, whether spoken far off or near. Her child, indeed, was at a distance; but she offered in her faith a channel of communication between it and Christ. With one hand of that faith she had held on to that Lord in whom all healing grace was stored, with the other to her suffering child,—thus herself a living conductor by which the power of Christ might run like an electric flash from him to her beloved. "*And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed,*" weak and exhausted as it would appear from the paroxysms of the spirit's going out; or, the circumstance which last is mentioned may indicate only that she was now taking that quiet rest, which hitherto the evil spirit had not allowed. It will answer so to the "clothed and in his right mind," (Luke viii. 30,) of another who had been tormented in the same way.

But the interesting question remains, *Why* this bitterness was not spared her, why the Lord should have presented himself under so different an aspect to her, and to most other suppliants? Sometimes he an-

\* Maldonatus: Loquitur pluraliter propter canes, quorum suum quisque dominum habet.

ticipated their needs, "Wilt thou be made whole?" (John v. 6.) or if not so, he who was waiting to be gracious required not to be twice asked for his blessings. Why was it that in this case, to use the words of an old divine, Christ "stayed long, wrestling with her faith, and shaking and trying whether it was fast-rooted" or no? Doubtless because he knew that it was a faith which would stand the proof, and that she would come out victorious from this sore trial; and not only so, but with a stronger, higher, purer faith than if she had borne away her blessing at once. Now she has learned, as then she never could have learned, that men ought always to pray and not to faint; that, with God, to delay a boon is not therefore to deny it. She had learned the lesson which Moses must have learned, when "the Lord met him, and sought to kill him," (Exod. vi. 24;) she won the strength which Jacob had won before, from his night-long struggle with the Angel. There is, indeed, a remarkable analogy between this history and that last. (Gen. xxxii. 24—32.) There as here, there is the same persevering struggle on the one side, the same persevering refusal on the other; there, as here, the stronger is at last overcome by the weaker. God himself yields to the might of faith and prayer; for a later prophet, interpreting that mysterious struggle, tells us the weapons which the patriarch wielded: "He wept and made supplication unto him," connecting with this the fact that "he had power over the angel and prevailed." (Hos. xii. 3, 4.) The two histories, indeed, only stand out in their full resemblance, when we keep in mind that the angel there, the Angel of the covenant, was no other than that Word, who, now incarnate,\* "blest" this woman at last, as he had blest at length Jacob at Peniel,—in each case rewarding thus a faith which had said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

Yet, when we thus speak of man overcoming God, we must never, of course, for an instant lose sight of this, that the power whereby he overcomes the resistance of God, is itself a power supplied by God. All that is man's is the faith or the emptiness of self, which enables him to appropriate and make so largely his own the fulness and power of God; so that here also that word comes true, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Thus when St. Paul (Col. i. 29,) speaks of himself under an image, which rested originally on Jacob's struggle, if there was not a direct allusion to it in the apostle's mind, as *striving* for the Colossians, *striving*,† that is, with God in prayer, (see iv.

\* This has been doubted by some; but see the younger VINTRINGA'S *Diss. de Luctâ Jacobi*, p. 18, *seq.*, in his *Diss. Sac.*, and DEVLING'S *Obss. Sac.*, p. 827, *seq.*

† Ἀγανακτήσεις. Cf. Col. ii. 1, where Grotius says rightly: *Per ἀγανά intelligit non sollicitudinem tantum, sed preces assiduas.*

12,) he immediately adds, "according to *his* working which worketh in me mightily."

We may observe, in conclusion, that we have three ascending degrees of faith, as it manifests itself in the breaking through of hinderances which would keep from Christ, in the paralytic, (Mark ii. 4;) the blind man at Jericho, (Mark x. 48;) and this woman of Canaan. The paralytic broke through the outward hinderances, the obstacles of things external; blind Bartimæus through the hinderances opposed by his fellow-men; but this woman, more heroically than all, through apparent hinderances even from Christ himself. These, in their seeming weakness, were the three mighty ones, not of David, but of David's Son, that broke through opposing hosts, until they could draw living water from wells of salvation. (2 Sam. xxiii. 16.)

## XXIV.

### THE HEALING OF ONE DEAF AND DUMB.

MARK vii. 31—37.

ST. MATTHEW tells us in general terms how when the Lord had returned from those coasts of Tyre and Sidon unto the sea of Galilee, "great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed,\* and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them;" (xv. 30;) but out of this multitude of cures St. Mark selects one to relate more in detail, and this, no doubt, because it was signalized by some circumstances not usual in other like cases of healing. It was that of a man deaf and having an impediment in his speech, one who, if he was not altogether dumb, was yet probably incapable of making any articulate sounds.† His case differs, apparently,

\* Κελλός, properly, crippled or maimed *in the hand*, as Jerome (in loc.) observes: *Quomodo claudus dicitur, qui uno claudicat pede, sic κελλός, appellatur, qui unam manum debilem habet. Nos proprietatem hujus verbi non habemus. He are equally without a single word which is its equivalent. At Matthew xviii. 8, it is evidently maimed of the hand. Yet here there may well be a question whether it means so much, for though, of course, it lay in the power of Christ to supply a lost limb, yet we nowhere read in detail of any miracle of this kind, and such a one seems contrary to the analogy of his work of healing; for he was come now, a Redeemer, that is, a setter free of man in his body and in his soul from the alien power which held him in bondage—a Redeemer, but not a Creator: even in his miracles which approach nearest to creation, he ever assumes a substratum on which to work; water, to turn into wine; bread to multiply by his power; and in man's case we may presume the same. It is no limitation of this divine power of Christ, to suppose that it had thus its law, according to which it wrought, and beyond which it did not extend. For this law is only the law of infinite fitness, which it received from itself.*

† Some make *μογιλαλῶν* here to signify mute, chiefly on account of the *ἀλαλῶν* of ver. 37; and they refer to Isai. xxxv. 6, *ἡ τὴν οὖρον αὐτῶν ἔσται ὡς ποταμὸν ἄβυσσος*, in proof; as also to Exod. iv. 11, where, though not the Septuagint, yet the three other

from that of the dumb man mentioned Matt. ix. 32 ; for while that man's evil is traced up distinctly and directly to a spiritual source, nothing of the kind is intimated here, nor are we, as Theophylact suggests, to presume such. Him his friends now brought to the great Healer, "and they beseech him to put his hand upon him." It is not, however, exactly in this way that he is willing to heal him.

It has been already observed, that there is no doubt a deep meaning in all the variations which mark the different healings of different sick and afflicted, a wisdom of God ordering all the circumstances of each particular cure. Were we acquainted as accurately as he who knew what was in man, with the spiritual condition of each who was brought within the circle of his grace, we should then perfectly understand why one was healed in the crowd, another led out of the city ere the work of restoration was commenced ; why for one a word effected a cure, for another a touch, while a third was sent to wash in the pool of Siloam, ere he came seeing ; why for these the process of restoration was instantaneous, while again another saw at first "men as trees walking." At all events, we are not for an instant to suppose in these gradually accomplished cures any restraint on the power of the Lord, save such as was willingly imposed by himself,—and this, doubtless, in each case having reference to, and being explicable by, the moral and spiritual state of the person who was passing under his hands ; though our ignorance of this prevents us from at once seeing the manifold wisdom which ordered each of his proceedings, and how it was conducted so as best to make the bodily healing a passage to the spiritual, which the Lord had ever in his eye.\*

On the present occasion him that he would heal he first "*took aside from the multitude,*" with which notice we may compare Mark viii. 23 ; "He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town." But for what reason does he isolate him thus ? The Greek Fathers say generally, for the avoiding of all show and ostentation ; but it cannot be

Greek translations use this word in the sense of dumb. Yet the ἐλάλει ὀρθῶς of ver. 35 makes it to me far more probable that the meaning which the derivation of the word more naturally suggests, and our translation has given, is the true. He was βραδύγλωσσος, ἰσχυρὸς γλῶσσιος, balbutiens—that is, he could make no intelligible sounds : but was not absolutely dumb. Cf. Isai. xxxii. 4, (LXX.) αἱ γλῶσσαι αἱ ψελλίζουσαι.

\* Maldonatus: Videtur etiam voluisse Christus non semper æqualiter suam divinitatem potentiamque declarare, quod non semper, etiamsi nos causa lateat, convenire judicaret. Aliquando solo verbo dæmones ejicit, mortuos exsuscitat, ostendens se omnino esse Deum ; aliquando tactu, salivâ, luto, sanat ægrotos, accommodans quodammodo potentiam suam ad modum agendi causarum naturalium, et ad sensum et consuetudinem hominum.

for this, since of all the miracles which he did we have but two in which any such withdrawal is recorded. Shall we say then that there was show and ostentation in the others? It is not much better to find, with Calvin, the reason in this, that he may pray with greater freedom.\* He, whose whole life was altogether prayer, needed not solitude for this. But rather his purpose in this was, that apart from the din and tumult and interruptions of the crowd, in solitude and silence, the man might be more recipient of deep and lasting impressions; even as the same Lord does now oftentimes lead a soul apart when he would speak with it, or heal it; sets it in the solitude of a sick chamber, or in loneliness of spirit, or takes away from it earthly companions and friends. He takes it aside, as this deaf and dumb out of the multitude, that in the hush of the world's din it may listen to him; as on a great scale he took his elect people aside into the wilderness, when he would first open their spiritual ear, and speak unto them his law.

The putting his finger into the ears of the man, the spitting and touching the man's tongue therewith, are easily recognized as symbolic actions. Nor is it hard to perceive why he should specially have used these in the case of one afflicted as this man was;—almost all other avenues of communication, save by sight and feeling, were of necessity precluded. Christ by these signs would awaken his faith, and stir up in him the lively expectation of a blessing. The fingers are put into the ears as to bore them, to pierce through the obstacles which hindered sounds from reaching them. This was the fountain-evil; he did not speak plainly because he did not hear; this defect, therefore, is mentioned as being first removed.† Then, as it is often through excessive drought that the tongue cleaves to the roof of the mouth, so the Lord gives here, in the second thing which he does, the sign of the removal of this evil, of the unloosing of the tongue. And, at the same time, all the healing virtue he shows to reside in his own body; he looks not for it from any other quarter; he takes nothing from any one else: but with the moisture of his own mouth upon his finger touched the tongue which he would set free from the bands which held it fast. It is not for its medicinal virtue that use is made of this, but as the suitable symbol of a power residing in and going forth from his body.‡

\* *Ut precandi ardorem liberius effundat.*

† Grotius: *Sape Christus externo aliquo signo inaspectabilem efficaciam velut spectandam exhibebat. Ita digitis in aures inmissis, irrigatæque linguæ testatum fecit se eum esse cujus vi clausi meatus quasi perterebantur, et lingua palato adhaerescens motum recuperaret.*

‡ Grotius: *Nec aliò hoc referendum mihi videtur quàm quò superiora, ut hoc quoque indicio ostenderetur ab ipso Jesu produsse hanc salutiferam virtutem, cum nihil adnotum esset affecto corpori, præter ipsa quæ ipsius Jesu erant propria.*



St. Mark, abounding as he always does in graphic touches, reproducing before our eyes each scene which he describes, tells us of the Lord, how this doing, "and looking up to heaven, he sighed." Nor has he failed to preserve for us the very word which Christ spake, in the very language in which he uttered it; he "*saiih unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.*" The looking up to heaven was a claiming of the divine help, or rather, since the fulness of divine power abode in him permanently, and not by fitful visitation as with others, this was an acknowledgment of his oneness with the Father, and that he did no other things save those which he saw the Father do. (Cf. Matt. xiv. 19; John xi. 41, 42.) Some explain the words "*he sighed,*" or "*he groaned,*" which are the words in the Rhemish version, as the deep voice of prayer in which he was at the moment engaged; but it is more probable to suppose that this poor helpless creature now brought before him, this living proof of the wreck which sin had brought about, of the malice of the devil in deforming the fair features of God's original creation, then wrung that groan from his heart. He that always felt, was yet now in his human soul touched with an especially lively sense of the miseries of the race of man.\* Compare John xi. 33, "He groaned in the spirit and was troubled," a trouble which had in like manner its source in the thought of the desolation which sin and death had wrought. As there the mourning hearts which were before him were but a specimen of the mourners of all times and all places, so was this poor man of all the variously afflicted and suffering children of Adam.† In the preservation of the actual Aramaic "*Ephphatha.*" which Christ spoke, as in the "*Talitha cumi*" of Mark v. 14,‡ we recognize the narrative of an eye and ear witness, from whom the

\* Chrysostom (in CRAMER'S *Catena*): Τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσιν ἐλεῶν, ἡ ποτὶν ταπεινωσὶν ἤγαγεν ταύτην ὃ τε μισόκαλος διάβολος, καὶ ἡ τῶν πρωτοπλάστων ἀπροσεξία.

† In the exquisite poem in *The Christian Year* which these words have suggested this sigh is understood rather as the sigh of one who looked onward to all the deeper spiritual evils of humanity, which would so often resist even *his* power of healing:

The deaf may hear the Saviour's voice,  
The fettered tongue its chain may break;  
But the deaf heart, the dumb by choice,  
The laggard soul that will not wake,  
The guilt that seems to be forgiven;—  
These baffle even the spells of heaven;  
In thought of these his brows benign,  
Not even in healing, cloudless shine.

‡ It is quite in St. Mark's manner to give the actual Aramaic words which Christ used, adding, however, in each case their interpretation. See iii. 17; v. 41; vii. 11; xiv. 36; xv. 34. Compare x. 46; xv. 22.

Evangelist had his account, and in whose soul the words of power, which were followed with such mighty consequences, which opened the ears, and loosed the tongue, and raised the dead, had indelibly impressed themselves.\*

The words "*He charged them that they should tell no man,*" would seem to imply that the friends of this afflicted man had perhaps accompanied Jesus out of the crowd, and having been witnesses of the cure, were now included with him in the same prohibition of divulging what had been done. The reasons which induced the Lord so often to give this charge of silence there has been occasion to enter on elsewhere, and to say something on the amount of guilt involved in the disobedience to this injunction. The exclamation in which the surprise and admiration of the beholders finds utterance, "*He hath done all things well,*" reminds us of the words of the first creation, (Gen. i. 31,†) upon which we are thus not unsuitably thrown back, for Christ's work is in the truest sense "a new creation." In the concluding remark of St. Matthew, "*They glorified the God of Israel,*" is involved, that of those present a great number were heathens, which we might easily expect in this half-hellenized region of Decapolis, and that from their lips was brought the confession, that the God, who had chosen Israel, was indeed above all gods.

\* Grotius: Hæc autem vox *Ephphatha* simul cum salivâ et tactu aurium ac linguæ ex hoc Christi facto ad Baptismi ritus postea translata sunt, ut significaretur non minus interna mentis impedimenta tolli per Spiritum Christi, quàm in isto homine sablata fuerant sensuum impedimenta. Nam et cor dicitur *διανοίγεσθαι*, Acts xvi. 14. Imò et cordi aures tribuuntur. The rite to which Grotius alludes is one that only found place in the Latin Church, as it survives in that of Rome. That the practice of the priest's touching the nostrils and ears of the child or catechumen about to be baptized, with moisture from his mouth, had its origin here, is plainly indicated by the word *Epheta*, which he used at the same time. Ambrose, addressing the catechumens, speaks thus (*De Init.*, c. 1): *Aperite igitur aures, et bonum odorem vitæ æternæ inhalatum vobis munere Sacramentorum carpite, quod vobis significavimus, cum apertionis celebrantes mysterium dicereamus, Epheta, quod est, adaperire; ut venturus unusquisque ad gratiam quid interrogaretur cognosceret, quid responderet, meminisse deberet.* Cf. the work *De Sacram.*, l. 1, c. 1, attributed to St. Ambrose.

† Ηερε καλώς πάντα πεποίηκε. There πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησε, καλῶ λῆιαι.

## XXV.

### THE MIRACULOUS FEEDING OF FOUR THOUSAND.

MATT. xv. 32—39; MARK viii. 1—9.

THERE is very little that might be said upon this miracle, which the preceding one of the same nature has not already anticipated. Whether this was wrought nearly in the same locality, namely, in the desert country belonging to Bethsaida, and not rather on the western, as the former on the eastern, side of the lake, has been sometimes debated. Yet it seems most probable that it was wrought nearly on the same spot. For thither the narrative of St. Mark appears to have brought the Lord. Leaving the coasts of Tyre and Sidon after the healing of the daughter of the Syrophenician woman, he is said to have again reached the sea of Galilee, and this through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. (vii. 31.) But all the cities of the Decapolis save one lay beyond Jordan, and on the eastern side of the lake; this notice therefore places him on the same side also. And, again, when immediately after the miracle he took ship and came to the region of Magdala, (Matt. xv. 39,) since Magdala was certainly on the western side, and his taking ship was most probably to cross the lake, and not to coast along its shores, there is here a confirmation of the same view.\*

\* St. Mark, who for Magdala substitutes Dalmanutha, does not help us here, as there are no further traces of this place; yet that it was on the western side of the lake, may be concluded from the fact that Christ's leaving it and crossing the lake, is described as a departing *εἰς τὸ πέραν*, an expression in the New Testament applied almost exclusively to the country east of the lake and of Jordan. In some maps, in that for instance which Lightfoot gives, Magdala is placed at the S.E. of the lake, but this is a mistake, and does not agree with passages which he himself quotes from Jewish writers. (*Chorograph.*, c. 76,) which all go to show that it was close to Tiberias. It is most probably the modern El-Madschdel, lying on the S.W. of the lake, and in the neighborhood of the city just named. So Mr. Greswell, *Dissert.*, v. 2, p. 334; WINER, *Real Wörterbuch*, s. v. Magdala; ROBINSON, *Biblical Researches*, v. 3, p. 278.

With all the points of similarity, there are also some points differing this second narrative from the first. Here the people had continued with the Lord three days, but on the former occasion nothing of the kind is noted; the provision too is somewhat larger, seven loaves and a few fishes, instead of five loaves and two fishes; as the number fed is somewhat smaller, four thousand now, instead of five thousand, as it was then; and the remaining fragments in this case fill but seven baskets,\* while in the former they had filled twelve. Of course the work, considered as a miraculous putting forth of the power of the Lord, in each case remains exactly the same.

At first it excites some surprise that the apostles, with that other miracle fresh in their memories, should now have been equally at a loss how the multitude should be fed as they were before. Yet this surprise rises out of our ignorance of man's heart, of our own heart, and of the deep root of unbelief which is there. It is evermore thus in times of difficulty and distress. All former deliverances are in danger of being forgotten;† the mighty interpositions of God's hand in former passages of men's lives fall out of their memories. Each new difficulty appears insurmountable, as one from which there is no extrication; at each recurring necessity it seems as though the wonders of God's grace are exhausted and have come to an end. God may have divided the Red Sea for Israel, yet no sooner are they on the other side, than be-

\* It is remarkable that all four Evangelists, in narrating the first miracle, agree in using the term *κοφίνους* to describe the baskets which were filled with the remaining fragments, while the two that relate the second equally agree there in using the term *σπυρίδας*. And that this variation was not accidental, but that there was some difference, is clear from our Lord's after words; when alluding to the two miracles, he preserves the distinction, asking his disciples how many *κοφίνους* on the first occasion they gathered up; how many *σπυρίδας* on the last. (Matt. xvi. 9, 10; Mark viii. 19, 20.) What the distinction was, is more difficult to say. The derivation of the words, *κόφινος* from *κόπρω* (= *ἀγγεῖον πλεστόν*, Suidas) and *σπυρίς* from *σπείρα*, does not help us, as each points to the baskets being of woven work. See, however, another derivation of *σπυρίς* in Mr. Greswell's *Dissert.*, v. 2, p. 358, and the distinction which he seeks to draw from it. Why the people, or at least the apostles should have been provided with the one or the other has been variously accounted for. Some say, to carry their own provisions with them, while they were travelling through a polluted land, such as Samaria. Mr. Greswell rather supposes that they might sleep in them, so long as they were compelled to lodge sub dio; and refers in confirmation, to the words of Juvenal (3. 13) *Judæis, quorum cophinus funumque supellex*. It appears from Acts ix. 25, that the *σπυρίς* might be of size sufficient to contain a man.

† Calvin: *Quia autem similis quotidie nobis obrepit torpor, eo magis cavendum. est ne unquam distrahantur mentes nostræ à reputandis Dei beneficiis, ut præteriti temporis experientia in futurum idem nos sperare doceat, quod jam semel vel sæpius largitus est Deus.*

cause there are no waters to drink, they murmur against Moses, and count that they must perish for thirst, (Exod. xvii. 1—7,) crying, “Is the Lord among us or not?” or, to adduce a still nearer parallel, once already the Lord had covered the camp with quails, (Exod. xvi. 13,) yet for all this even Moses himself cannot believe that he will provide flesh for all that multitude. (Num. xi. 21, 22.) It is only the man of a full formed faith, a faith such as apostles themselves at this time had not, who argues from the past to the future, and truly derives confidence from God’s former dealings of faithfulness and love. (Cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 34—37 : 2 Chron. xvi. 7, 8.)

And were it not so, even granting that they did remember how their Master had once spread a table in the wilderness, and were persuaded that he could do it again, yet they might very well have doubted whether he would choose a second time to put forth his creative might ; —whether there was in these present multitudes that spiritual hunger, which was worthy of being met and rewarded by this interposition of divine power ; whether these too were seeking the kingdom of heaven, and were so worthy to have all other things, those also which pertain to this lower life, to the supply of their present needs, added unto them.\*

\* It is at least an ingenious allegory which Augustine starts, that these two miracles respectively set forth Christ’s communicating of himself to the Jew and to the Gentile ; that as the first is a parable of the Jewish people finding in him the satisfaction of their spiritual need, so this second, in which the people came from far, even from the far country of idols, is a parable of the Gentile world. The details of his application may not be of any very great value ; but the perplexity of the apostles here concerning the supply of the new needs, notwithstanding all that they had already witnessed, will then exactly answer to the slowness with which they themselves, as the ministers of the new Kingdom, did recognize that Christ was as freely given to, and was as truly the portion of, the Gentile as the Jew. This sermon the Benedictine Edd. place in the Appendix (*Serm.* 81), but the passage about Eutyches might easily be, indeed bears witness of being, an interpolation, and the rest is so entirely in Augustine’s manner, that I have not hesitated to quote it as his. Hilary had before him suggested the same: *Sicut autem illa turba quam prius pavit, Judaicæ credentium convenit turbæ, ita hæc populo gentium comparatur.*

## XXVI.

### THE OPENING THE EYES OF ONE BLIND AT BETHSAIDA.

MARK viii. 22—26.

THERE is little peculiar in this miracle which has not been treated of elsewhere. For Christ's leading the man out of the town,\* and touching his eyes as he did, see what has been said already on the miracle last treated of but one. The Lord links on his power, as was frequent with him, to forms in use among men; working through these forms something higher than they could have produced, and clothing the supernatural in the forms of the natural. It was not otherwise, when he bade his disciples to anoint the sick with oil,—one of the most esteemed helps for healing in the East. Not the oil, but his Word was to heal, yet without the oil the disciples might have found it too hard to believe in the power which they were exerting,—those who through their faith were to be healed, in the power which should heal them. (Mark vi. 13; Jam. v. 14.) So the figs for Hezekiah's boil were indeed the very remedy which a physician with only natural appliances at command would have used; (Isai. xxxviii. 22;) yet now, hiding itself behind this nature, clothing itself in the forms of this nature, did an effectual work of preternatural healing go forward.

The only circumstance which remains distinctive of this narration is the progressiveness of the cure; which is not itself without analogies in other cures, as in that of the man blind from his birth, who only after he had been to wash in Siloam, "came seeing;" (John ix. 7;) yet the steps of the progress are marked more plainly here than in any other

\* Bengel gives this as the reason why the Lord led him out into the country: *Cæco visum recuperanti latior erat aspectus cœli et operum divinorum in naturâ, quàm operum humanorum in pago.*

instance. For first “*when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught. And he looked up and said, I see men, as trees, walking;*” certain moving forms about him, but without the power of discerning their shape or magnitude,—trees he should have accounted them from their height, but men from their motion.\* Then the Lord perfects the cure: “*He put his hands again upon his eyes,† and made him look up, and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.*”

Chrysostom and others find the reasons for this only progressive cure, in the imperfectness of this blind man’s faith, whereof they see an evidence in this, that while others in like case cried with their own voices to Jesus for the opening of their eyes, this man was brought to him by others, himself perhaps scarcely expecting a benefit. The gracious Lord, then, who would not reject him, but who could as little cure him so long as there was on his part this desperation of healing, gave a glimpse of the blessing, that he might kindle in him a longing for the fulness of it, that he might show him how he was indeed an opener of the blind eyes. Others again see a testimony here of the freeness of God’s grace, which is linked to no single way of manifestation, but works in divers manners, sometimes accomplishing in a moment what at other times it brings about only little by little.‡

There has oftentimes been traced in this healing an apt symbol of the manner in which he who is the Light of the world makes the souls that come to him partakers of the illumination of his grace. Not all at once are the old errors and the old confusions put to flight; not all at once do they see clearly: for a while there are many remains of their old blindness, much which for a season still hinders their vision; they

\* In the very interesting account which Cheselden has given (*Anatomy*, p. 301, 1768, London,) of the feelings of a child, who having been blind from his birth, was enabled to see, a curious confirmation of the truthfulness of this narrative occurs: “When he first saw, he knew not the shape of any thing, nor any one thing from another, however different in shape or magnitude, but being told what things were, whose forms he before knew from feeling, he would carefully observe that he might know them again.”

† Chemnitz (*Harm. Evang.*, c. 84): *Manus imponit ut ostendat carnem suam esse instrumentum per quod et cum quo ipse ó Δόγος æternus omnia opera vivificationis perficiat.*

‡ Calvin: *Paulatim cæco visum restituit: quod ideo factum esse probabile est, ut documentum in hoc homine statueret liberæ suæ dispensationis, nec se astrictum esse ad certam normam, quin hoc vel illo modo virtutem suam proferret. Oculos ergo cæci non statim ita illuminat ut officio suo fungantur, sed obscurum illis confusumque intuitum instillat: deinde alterâ manuum impositione integram aciem illis reddit. Ita gratia Christi, quæ in alios repente effusa prius erat, quasi guttatim defluxit in hunc hominem.*

see men but as trees walking. Yet in good time Christ finishes the work which he has begun ; he lays his hands on them anew, and they see every man clearly.\*

\* Bede : Quem uno verbo totum simul curare poterat, paulatim curat, ut magnitudinem humanæ cæcitatæ ostendat, quæ vix et quasi per gradus ad lucem redeat, et gratiam suam nobis indicet, per quam singula perfectionis incrementa adjuvat.



## XXVII.

### THE HEALING OF THE LUNATIC CHILD.

MATT. xvii. 14—21; MARK ix. 14—29; LUKE ix. 37—42.

THE old adversaries of our Lord, the Scribes, had taken advantage of his absence on the Mount of Transfiguration, to win a temporary triumph, or at least something like one, over his disciples, who were themselves weakened by the absence of their Lord; and with him of three, the chiefest among themselves—those, too, in whom, as habitually the nearest to him, we may suppose his power most mightily to have resided. It was here again, as it was once before during the absence of Moses and his servant Joshua, on his mount of a fainter transfiguration. Then, too, in like manner, the enemy had found his advantage, and while prevailed against the people. (Exod. xxxii.)

It would seem that the disciples who were left below had undertaken to cast out an evil spirit of a peculiar malignity, and had proved unequal to the task; "*they could not.*" And now the Scribes were pressing the advantage which they had gained by this miscarriage of the disciples to the uttermost. A great multitude too were gathered round, spectators of the defeat of the servants of Christ; and the strife was at the highest,—the Scribes, no doubt, arguing from the impotence of the servants to the impotence of the Master,\* and they denying the conclusion; when suddenly he concerning whom the strife was, appeared, returning from the holy mount, his face and person yet glistening, as there is reason to suppose, with reminiscences and traces of the glory which had clothed him there, reminiscences and traces which had not yet disappeared, nor faded into the light of common day,—so that "*all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed.*" Yet here

\* Calvin: Scribæ victores insultant, nec modò subsannant discipulos, sed proterviunt adversùs Christum, quasi in illorum personâ exinanita esset ejus virtus.

the impression which that glory made was other than the impression of the countenance of Moses. When the multitude saw *him* as he came down from *his* mountain, the skin of his face shining, "they were afraid to come nigh him," (Exod. xxxiv. 30,) for that glory upon his face was a threatening glory, the awful and intolerable brightness of the Law. But the glory of God shining in the face of Christ Jesus, though awful too, was also an attractive glory, full of grace and beauty, drawing men to him, not driving them from him; and thus, indeed, "*all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed,*" such gleams of brightness played around him still; yet did they not therefore flee from him, but rather, as taken with that brightness, they "*running to him, saluted him.*"\* (Compare 2 Cor. iii. 18.)

Yet the sight and sounds which greeted him on his return to our sinful world, how different were they from those which he had just left upon the holy mount! There the highest harmonies of heaven; here some of the wildest and harshest discords of earth.† There he had been receiving honor and glory from the Father; here his disciples, those to whom his work had been intrusted in his absence, had been procuring for him, as far as in them lay, shame and dishonor. But as when some great captain, suddenly arriving upon a field of battle, where his subordinate lieutenants have well nigh lost the day, and brought all into a hopeless confusion, with his eye measures at once the necessities of the moment, and with no more than his presence causes the tide of victory to turn, and every thing to right itself again, so was it now. The Lord arrests the advancing and victorious foe; he addresses himself to the Scribes, and saying, "*What question ye with them?*" takes the baffled and hard pressed disciples under his own protection, implying by his words, "If you have any question, henceforth it must be with me." But they to whom these words were spoken were slow to accept the challenge; for it was one from among the multitude, the father of the suffering child, which was his only one, who took up the word, and, kneeling down before Jesus, declared all his own misery and his son's.

\* This is more likely than that it was the mere salutation, as Theophylact proposes, of one that had been absent for awhile: though he too was not unaware of the right explanation: *τινὲς δὲ φασὶν ὅτι ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ ὠραιοτέρα γινωμένη ἀπὸ τοῦ φωτὸς τῆς μεταμορφώσεως, ἐφείλετο τοῦς ἄλλους πρὸς τὸ ἀσπάξισθαι.* Bengel with his usual beauty: *Tangebantur à gloriâ, etiâmsi nescirent quid in monte actum esset.* Cf. Marc. x. 32; Luc. xix. 11, nec non Ex. iv. 14; xxxiv. 29. *Ocultam cum Deo conversationem faciliè sentias majorem hominum erga te proclivitatem insequi.*

† These mighty and wondrous contrasts have not escaped the Christian artist. In them lies the *idea* of Raphael's great picture of the Transfiguration, and its two parts which so mightily sustain one another.

St. Mark paints the whole scene with the hand of a master, and his account of this miracle, compared with those of the other Evangelists, would be alone sufficient to vindicate for him an original character, and to refute the notion of some, that we have in him only an epitomizer, now of one, and now of the other.\* All the symptoms, as put into the father's mouth, or described by the sacred historians, exactly agree with those of epilepsy;—not that we have here only an epileptic; but this was the ground on which the deeper spiritual evils of this child were superinduced. The fits were sudden and lasted remarkably long; the evil spirit “*hardly departeth from him;*”—“*a dumb spirit,*” St. Mark calls it, a statement which does not contradict that of St. Luke, “*he suddenly crieth out;*” this dumbness was only in respect of articulate sounds; he could give no utterance to these. Nor was it a natural defect, as where the string of the tongue has remained unloosed, (Mark viii. 32,) or the needful organs for speech are wanting, nor a defect under which he had always labored; but the consequence of this possession. When the spirit took him in its might, then in these paroxysms of his disorder it tare him, till he foamed † and gnashed with his teeth; and altogether he pined away like one the very springs of whose life were dried up. ‡ And while these accesses of his disorder might come upon him at any moment and in any place, they often exposed the unhappy sufferer to the worst accidents: “*ofttimes he falleth into the fire,*

\* Even Augustine falls in with this view (*De Cons. Evang.*, l. 1, c. 2): Divus Marcus eum [Matthæum] subsequutus tanquam pedissequus et brevior ejus videtur.

† Compare the remarkable account in LUCIAN'S *Philopseudes*, c. 16, where I cannot but think there is an ironical allusion to this and other cures of demoniacs by our Lord: Πάντες ἴσασι τὸν Σόρον τὸν ἐκ τῆς Παλαιστίνης, τὸν ἐπὶ τούτων σοφιστὴν, ὅσους παραλαβὼν κατὰπίπτοντας πρὸς τὴν σελήνην καὶ τὸ ὄφθαλμῷ διαστρέφοντας καὶ ἀφροῦ πιμπλάμενους τὸ στόμα ὅμως ἀνίστησι καὶ ἀποπέμπει ἀρτίους ἐπὶ μισθῷ μεγάλῳ ἀπαλλάξας τῶν δεινῶν. There is much beside this quoted in the passage, of interest.

‡ οαίναι. If indeed this word has not reference to the stiffness and starkness, the unnatural rigescence of the limbs in the accesses of the disorder. Compare 2 Kin. xiii. 4, LXX. Such would not indeed be the first, but might well be the secondary meaning of the word, since that which is dried up loses its pliability, and the place which the word occupies makes it most probable that the father is describing not the general pining away of his son, but his symptoms when the paroxysm takes him. The σεληνιαζόμενοι, (in other Greek σεληνιακοί, σεληνόβλητοι,) are mentioned once besides in the New Testament, (Matt. iv. 24,) where they are distinguished from the δαιμονιζόμενοι. The distinction, however, whatever it was, in the popular language would continually disappear, and the father here saying of his son, σεληνιάζεται, does not express the fact, or rather the consequence, of his possession. Of course the word originally, like *μανία*, (from *μήνη*) and lunaticus, arose from the wide-spread belief of the evil influence of the moon (*Ps.* cxxi. 6,) on the human frame. (See CREUZER'S *Symbolik*, v. 2, p. 571.)

and oft into the water.” In St. Mark the father attributes these fits to the direct agency of the evil spirit : “ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him ;” yet such calamities might equally be looked at as the natural consequences of his unhappy condition.\*

But when the father told the Lord of the ineffectual efforts which the disciples had made for his relief, “*I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not,*” he with a sorrowful indignation exclaimed, “*O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you ? how long shall I suffer you ?*” And here we have two different applications of these words. Some, as for instance Origen, apply them to the disciples, and them alone ; they suppose that our Lord speaks thus, grieved and indignant at the weakness of their faith, and that even so brief a separation from him had shorn them of their strength, and left them powerless against the kingdom of darkness ; and the after discourse (Matt. xvii. 20) seems to make for such an application. Others, as Chrysostom, and generally the early interpreters, would pointedly exclude the disciples from the rebuke ; and they give it all to the surrounding multitude, and certainly the term “*generation*” seems to point to them, though less personally, than as being specimens and representatives of the whole Jewish people, the father himself coming singularly forward as an example of the unbelieving temper of the whole generation to which he pertained, (Mark ix. 22,) and therefore being an especial sharer in the condemnation. In St. Mark indeed it is primarily addressed to him : “*He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation ;*” yet the language shows that the rebuke is intended to pass on to many more. And indeed the most satisfactory explanation is that which reconciles both these views ; the disciples are not exclusively aimed at, nor chiefly, but rather the multitude and the father : they, however, are included in the rebuke ; their unfaithfulness and unbelief had brought them, for the

\* These extracts will abundantly justify what was said above of the symptoms of this child's case being those of one taken with epilepsy. Cælius Aurelianus (*Morb. Chron.*, l. 1, c. 4) : Alii [epileptici] publicis in locis cadendo sædantur, adjunctis etiam externis periculis, loci causâ præcipites dati, aut in flumina vel mare cadentes. And Paulus Ægineta, the last of the great physicians of the old world, describing epilepsy, (l. 3, c. 13,) might almost seem to have borrowed his account from this history: Morbus comitialis est convulsio totius corporis cum principalium actionum læsione, . . . fit hæc affectio maxime pueris, postea verò etiam in adolescentibus et in vigore consistentibus. Instante verò jam symptomate collapto ipsiis derepente contigit et convulsio, et quandoque nihil significans exclamatio (ἐξαιφνης κριάζεται, Luke ix. 39). Præcipuum vero ipsorum signum est oris spuma (μετὰ ἀφροῦν, Luke ix. 39 ; cf. LUCIAN'S *Philopseudes*, c. 16.)

time, back to the level with their nation, and they must share with them in a common reproach. "*How long shall I be with you?*" are words not so much of one longing to put off the coil of flesh,\* as rather of a master, complaining of the slowness and dulness of his scholars. "Have I abode with you all this time, and have you profited so little by my teaching?" feeling, it may be, at the same time, that till their task was learned, he could not leave them, he must abide with them still.† We may compare his words to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" (John xiv. 9.)

And now he says, "*Bring him unto me.*" As the staff in Gehazi's hand could not arouse the dead child, but the prophet himself must come and take the work in hand, before ever a cure can be wrought, so must it be now. Yet the first bringing of the child to Jesus causes another of the fearful paroxysms of his disorder, so that "*he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming.*" The kingdom of Satan in small and in great is ever stirred into a fiercer activity by the coming near of the kingdom of Christ. Satan has great wrath, when his time is short.‡ But as the Lord on occasion of another difficult cure (Mark v. 9) began a conversation with the sufferer himself, seeking thus to inspire him with confidence, to bring back something of calmness to his soul, so does he now with the representative of the sufferer, the father, it being impossible, from his actual condition, to do it with himself: "*How long is it ago since this came unto him?*" But the father, answering indeed the question, that it was "*of a child,*" and for the stirring of more pity, describing again the miserable perils in which these fits involved his child, yet ill content that any thing should come before the healing, if a healing were possible, having, too, present before his mind the recent failure which the disciples had made, added, "*If thou, if thou more than these, canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.*" He says "*us,*" so entirely is his own life knit up with his child's life: as the Canaanitish woman, pleading for her daughter, had cried, "Have mercy on me." (Matt. xv. 22.) Yet at the same time he reveals by that "*if*" how he had come with no unquestioning faith in the power of the Lord to aid, but was rendering the difficult cure more difficult still by his own doubting and unbelief.

\* Jerome (*Comm. in Matth.*, in loc.): Non quod tædio superatus sit, et mansuetus ac mitis; . . . sed quod in similitudinem medici si ægrotum videat contra sua præcepta se gerere dicat: Usquequo accedam ad domum tuam, quousque artis perdam injuriam; me aliud jubente et te aliud perpetrante?

† Bengel: Festinabat ad Patrem: nec tamen abitum se facere posse sciebat, priusquam discipulos ad fidem perduxisset. Molesta erat tarditas eorum.

‡ Calvin: Quo propior affulget Christi gratia, et efficacius agit, eò impotentius furit Satan.

Our Lord's answer is not without its difficulty, especially as it appears in the original, but the sense of it is plainly the following; "That 'if' of thine, that uncertainty whether this can be done or not, is to be resolved by thee and not by me. There is a condition without which this thy child cannot be healed; but the fulfilling of the condition lies with no other than thyself. The absence of faith on thy part, and not any overmastering power in this malignant spirit, is that which straitens me; if this cure is hard, it is thou that renderest it so. Thou hast said, *If I can do any thing*; but the question is, '*If thou canst believe*;' this is the hinge upon which all must turn"—and then with a pause, and no merely suspended sense as in our translation,\* follow those further words, "*All things are possible to him that believeth.*" So that faith is here, as in all other cases, set as the condition of healing; on other occasions it is the faith of the person; but here, that being impossible, the father's is accepted instead; even as the Syrophenician mother's in the room of her daughter's. (Matt. xv. 22.) Thus the Lord appears, in Olshausen's words, in some sort a *μαμευτης πιστευως*, helping the birth of faith in that empty soul. And now, though with pain and with sore travail, it has come to the birth, so that the father exclaims, "*Lord, I believe;*" and then the little spark of faith which is enkindled in his soul revealing to him the abysmal deeps of unbelief which are there, he adds this further, "*Help thou mine unbelief.*"† For thus it is ever: only in the light of the actual presence of grace in the soul does any man perceive the strength and prevalence of the opposing corruption. Before he had no measure by which to measure his deficiency. Only he who believes, guesses aught of the unbelief of his heart.

But now, when this condition of healing is no longer wanting on his part, the Lord, meeting and rewarding even the weak beginnings of his faith, accomplishes the cure. We may observe, in Christ's address to the foul spirit, the majestic "*I charge thee;*" no longer one whom thou mayest dare to disobey, against whom thou mayest venture to struggle, but I, the Prince of the kingdom of light, "*charge thee, come out of him.*" Nor is this all: he shall "*enter no more into him.*" Christ bars his return; he shall not take advantage of his long possession, presently to come back (Matt. xii. 45,) and re-assert his dominion; the cure shall be perfect and lasting. Most unwillingly the evil spirit departs, seeking to

\* The words, I imagine, should be pointed thus: τὸ, εἰ δύνασαι πιστεῦσαι πάντα ἄλλα τῷ πιστεύοντι, and Bengel enters rightly into the construction of the first clause, explaining it thus: Hoc, si potes credere, res est; hoc agitur. Calvin: Tu me rogas ut subveniam quoad potero; atqui inexhaustum virtutis fontem in me reperies, si modo afferas satis amplam fidei mensuram.

† AUGUSTINE, *Serm.* 43, c. 6, 7.

destroy that which he can no longer retain ; as Fuller, with wit which is in season and out of season, expresses it, “like an outgoing tenant that cares not what mischief he does.”\* So fearful was this last paroxysm, so entirely had it exhausted all the powers of the child, “*that he was as one dead ; and many said, He is dead ; but Jesus took him by the hand,*” and from that touch of the Lord of life there came into him life anew : even as we often elsewhere find a reviving power to be by the same channel conveyed. (Dan. x. 8, 9 ; Rev. i. 17 ; Matt. xvii. 6—8.)

Afterwards the disciples asked privately how it came to pass that they were baffled in the attempts which they had made to accomplish the cure, since they were not exceeding their commission, (Matt. x. 8,) and had on former occasions found the devils subject to them ; and the Lord tells them, because of their unbelief, because of their lack of that to which, and to which only, all things are possible. They had made but a languid use of the means for stirring up and strengthening faith ; while yet, though their locks were shorn, they would go forth, as before, against their enemies, being certain to be foiled whensoever they encountered, as they did here, an enemy of peculiar malignity ; for the phrase “*this kind*” marks that there are orders of evil spirits, that as there is a hierarchy of heaven, so is there an inverted hierarchy of hell. The same is intimated in the mention of the unclean spirit going and taking “*seven other spirits, more wicked than himself,*” (Matt. xii. 45 ;) and at Ephes. vi. 12, there is probably a climax, St. Paul mounting up from one degree of spiritual power and malignity to another. “*This kind,*” he says, “*goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*” The faith which shall be effectual against this must be a faith exercised in prayer, that has not relaxed itself by an habitual compliance with the demands of the lower nature, but often girt itself up to an austerer rule, to rigor and self-denial.

But as the secret of all weakness is unbelief, so of all strength is faith ; and this our Lord teaches them when he adds, “*For verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove ; and*

\* Gregory the Great (*Moral.*, l. 32, c. 19) : Ecce eum non discerpserat cum tenebat, exiens discerpit : quia nimirum tunc pejus cogitationes mentis dilaniat, cum jam egressus divinam virtute compulsus appropinquat. Et quem mutus possederat, cum clamoribus deserebat : quia plerumque cum possidet, minora tentamenta irrogat : cum vero de corde pellitur, acriori infestatione percutitur. Cf. *Hom. 12 in Ezek.*, and H. de Sto. Victore ; Dum puer ad Dominum conversus, omnia conversi ad Dominum plerumque a dæmonio gravius pulsi, et in se excruciantur, vel de sua expulsione se vindicet Diabolus.

*nothing shall be impossible unto you.*" The image re-appears with some modifications, Luke xvii. 6; and St. Paul probably alludes to these words of his Lord, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. Many explain "*faith as a grain of mustard seed*" to mean *lively* faith, with allusion to the keen and biting powers of that grain.\* But it certainly is not upon this side that the comparison is to be brought out; rather, as Maldonatus rightly remarks, it is the smallest faith, with a tacit contrast between a grain of mustard seed, a very small thing, and a mountain, a very great. That smallest shall be effectual to work on this largest. The least spiritual power shall be potent for the overthrow of the mightiest powers which are merely of this world.

\* Augustine (*Serm.* 246): Modicum videtur granum sinapis; nihil contentibilis adspectu, nihil fortius gusto. Quod quid est aliud, nisi maximus ardor et intima vis fidei in ecclesiâ?



## XXVIII.

### THE STATER IN THE FISH'S MOUTH.

MATT. xvii. 24—27.

THIS miracle finds a place only in the Gospel of St. Matthew, and a nearer contemplation of its features will show why we might even beforehand have expected to meet it, if in one only, then in that which is eminently the theocratic Gospel. But its significance has oftentimes been wholly missed, and the entire transaction emptied of its higher meaning, robbed too of all its deeper lessons, by the assumption that this money which was demanded of Peter was a civil impost, a tribute owing, like the penny of a later occasion, (Matt. xxii. 19,) to the Roman emperor; and the word "*tribute*"\* used in our translation, rather upholds this error, and leads men's thoughts in the wrong direction,—and to consider it this civil impost, instead of what it truly was, a theocratic payment, due to the temple and the temple's God. And this error has brought in with it and necessitated another: for, as the only means of maintaining any appearance of an argument in our Lord's words, it has been needful to understand the kingly dignity, the royal birth, on the ground of which Christ here exempts himself from the payment, to be his Davidical descent, and not, as it is indeed, his divine.

It is true that this erroneous interpretation has been maintained by some, I may say by many expositors, ancient and modern, of high authority; yet rather, it would seem, in most cases, from not having the true interpretation, which carries conviction with it, before them, than from deliberately preferring the other. Thus Augustine adduces this passage in connection with Rom. xiii. 1—7, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers . . . . Render, therefore, to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due,"—and finds in it a motive for a willing obedience

\* In the original, τὰ δίδραχμα.

on the part of the faithful to the civil power ;\* and Clement of Alexandria draws from it the same lesson. Origen, too, supposes it a civil payment ; and Jerome, also, throughout takes this wrong standing point from which to explain this miracle ; so too, in modern times, Maldonatus, who is aware of, but distinctly rejects, the correcter interpretation,—being here, for once, at one with Calvin, the great object of his polemical hatred. The last, however, upholds this view in a modified form,—he supposes that the money claimed was indeed the temple dues, but yet which now had been by the Romans alienated from its original destination, they compelling the Jews to pay it into the Roman treasury.† This however, as will be seen, is historically incorrect, that alienation not having taken place till a later time.‡

The arguments for the other interpretation, both external and internal, are so prevailing, as hardly to leave a residue of doubt upon any mind before which they are fairly brought. For, in the first place, this didrachm was exactly the sum<sup>§</sup> which we find mentioned Exod. xxx. 11—16, as the ransom of the soul, to be paid by every Israelite above twenty years old, to the service and current expenses of the tabernacle, or, as it afterwards would be, of the temple.|| It is true that there it

\* *De Catechiz. Rud.*, c. 24: Ipse Dominus ut nobis hujus sanæ doctrinæ præberet exemplum, pro capite hominis, quo erat indutus, tributum solvere non dedignatus est. Clemens of Alex (*Paedag.*, l. 2. Potter's Ed., v. 1, p. 172): Τὸν στατήρα τοῖς τελόνοις δοῦς, τὰ Καίσαρος ἀποδοῦς τῷ Καίσαρι.

† Ita quasi alienati essent Judæi à Dei imperio, profanis tyrannis solvebant sacrum censum in Lege indictum.

‡ Add to these Wolf (*Cura*, in loc.), who has the wrong interpretation ; and Petitus (*Crit Sac.*, 9, 2566) : Corn. à Lapide ; and only the other day, and after any further mistake seemed impossible, Wieseler (*Chronol. Synopse*, p. 265, sqq.) has returned to the old error. The true meaning has been perfectly seized by Hilary (*Comm. in Matth.*, in loc.) by Ambrose (*Ep. 7. ad Justum*, c. 12), and in the main by Chrysostom (*In Matth.*, Hom. 54.) and Theophylact, who yet have gone astray upon Num. iii. 40—51 ; and in later times by Cameron (*Crit. Sac.*, in loc.), by Freher (*Crit. Sac.*, v. 9, p. 3633), by Hammond, who has altogether a true insight into the matter. Grotius, Lightfoot, Bengel, Michaelis, and last of all by Olshausen, and Mr. Greswell (*Dissert.*, v. 2, p. 376).

§ It is true that in the Septuagint (Exod. xxx. 13) it is ἡμισίον τοῦ δίδραχμον. But this arises from their expressing themselves, as naturally they would, according to the Alexandrian drachm, which was twice the value of the Attic. (See HAMMOND, in loc.)

|| The sum there named is a half shekel. Before the Babylonian exile, the shekel was only a certain weight of silver, not a coined money ; in the time, however, of the Maccabees, (1 Macc. xv. 6,) the Jews received the privilege, or won the right, from the kings of Syria of coining their own money, and the shekels, half shekels, and quarter shekels now found in the cabinets of collectors are to be referred to this period. These growing scarce, and not being coined any more, it became the custom to estimate the temple dues as two drachms, (the δίδραχμον here required,) a sum actually

seems only to have been ordered to be paid on the occasions, which most probably were rare, of the numbering of the people. But whether from such having been the real intention of the divine Legislator, or from a later custom which arose only after the Babylonian captivity, it had grown into an annual payment. Some have thought they found traces of it earlier,—and, indeed, there seem distinct notices of it, 2 Kin. xii. 4; 2 Chron. xxiv. 5, 6, 9; and all the circumstances of what is there described as the collection which “Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness,” seem to make for the supposition.\* At Nehemiah x. 32, the circumstance that it is a *third* part of a shekel, and not a half, which they agree to pay, makes it more questionable, as they would scarcely have ventured to alter the amount of a divinely instituted payment; yet the fact that it was yearly, and that it was expressly for the service of the house of God, would lead us to think that it can be no other payment which is meant; and they may have found an excuse for the alteration in their present distress. Josephus† mentions that it was an annual payment in his time; and Philo, who tells us how conscientiously and ungrudgingly it was paid by the Jews of the Dispersion, as well as by the Jews of Palestine, so that in almost every city there was a sacred treasury for the collection of these dues, some of which came from cities beyond the limits of the Roman empire; and then at certain times there were sacred messengers selected from among the worthiest

somewhat larger than the half shekel, as those that have compared together the weights of the existing specimens of each have found; thus Josephus (*Antt.*, l. 3, c. 8, § 2): ‘Ο δὲ σίκλος, νόμισμα Ἑβραίων ὄν, Ἀττικὸς δέχεται δραχμῶν ἑσσαράς. As the produce of the miracle was to pay for two persons, the sum required was four drachms, or a whole shekel, and the *στατήρ* found in the mouth of the fish is just that sum. It indeed often bore the name of *τετραδράχμος*. Jerome: *Siclus autem, id est stater, habet drachmas quatuor*. It is almost needless to say that this stater is not the gold coin that more accurately bears that name, which would have been equal not to four, but to twenty, drachms; but rather, as is said above, the silver, tetradrachm, which in later times of Greece came to be called a stater. That other stater, equal to the Persian daric, would have been worth something more than sixteen shillings of our money, this three shillings and threepence. (See the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt.* s. vv. *Drachma* and *Stater*, and WINER'S *Real Wörterbuch*, s. v. *Sekel*.) It is curious that Theophylact should seem ignorant of what this stater is. Some think it, he says, a precious stone which is found in Syria.

\* So Dathe; Michaelis (*Mos Recht*, v. 3, p. 202,) questions or denies it.

† *Antt.*, l. 18, c. 9, § 1. The time appointed for the payment was between the 15th and 25th of the month Adar (March), that is, about the feast of the Passover. Yet no secure chronological conclusions in regard to our Lord's ministry can be won from this; as, through his absence from Capernaum, the money might have been for some time due. Indeed, in all probability, the feast of Tabernacles was now at hand.

to bear the collected money to Jerusalem.\* It was only after the destruction of that city, that Vespasian caused this capitation tax to be henceforward paid into the imperial treasury, instead of the treasury of the temple, which now no longer existed.

The words of Josephus on this matter are as explicit as can be; these words I will quote, as the only argument produced against this scheme is, that it was *before* the present time, and as early as Pompey, that these moneys were diverted from their original destination, and made payable to the Roman treasury. Of Vespasian he says,† “He imposed a tribute on the Jews wheresoever they lived, requiring each to pay yearly two drachms to the capital, as before they were wont to pay them to the temple at Jerusalem.” But of Pompey he merely says, that “he made Jerusalem tributary to the Romans,”‡ without any mention whatever of his laying hands on this tax, of which we have already seen that abundant evidence exists that it continued long after his time to be rendered to the temple. Not otherwise indeed could Titus, when he was reproaching the Jews with the little provocation which they had for their revolt, have reminded the revolters how the Romans had permitted them to collect their own sacred imposts.§

We may observe again that it is not the publicans that are said to come demanding this tribute, which would have been the natural appellation of the collectors, had they been the ordinary tax-gatherers, or this the ordinary tax. And the tone again of the demand, “*Doth not your master pay the didrachm?*”|| is hardly the question of a rude Roman tax-gatherer, who had detected any one in the act of evading, as he thought, the tax; but exactly in keeping, when the duty of paying was a moral one, which yet if any declined, there was scarcely at hand any power to compel the payment.¶

\* *De Monarch.*, l. 2: Ἱεροσολμοῦ τοῶν χρημάτων, ἀριστίωδην ἐπικραθύντες. The whole passage reminds one much of the collection, and the manner of the transmission, of the gifts of the faithful in Achaia to Jerusalem by the hands of Paul. We find from Cicero's oration *Pro Flacco*, (c. 28,) that one accusation made against the latter was that he prevented the transmission of these temple dues to Jerusalem. He bears incidentally witness to the universality of the practice: Cūm aurum, Iudæorum nomine, quotannis ex Italiâ et ex omnibus vestris provinciis Hierosolymam exportari solet. Flaccus sanxi edicto, ne ex Asiâ exportari liceret.

† *Bell. Jud.*, l. 7, c. 6, § 6.

‡ *Antt.*, l. 14, c. 4, § 4. Τὰ μὲν Ἱεροσόλυμα ὑποτελῆ φόρον Ῥωμαίοις ἐποίησεν.

§ Δασμολογεῖν ἦν ἐπὶ τῷ Θεῷ ἐπιτρέψαμεν.

|| Τὰ δίδραχμα, with the article, as something perfectly well known: in the plural the first time, to mark the *number* of didrachms that were received, being one from each person; on the second, to mark the yearly *repetition* of the payment from each.

¶ Kuinoel (*in loc.*), who may be numbered among the right interpreters

But the most prevailing argument of all, that this was God's money which should be rendered to God, and not Cesar's which was to be rendered to Cesar, is, that there would be no force whatever in the Lord's conclusion, "*Then are the children free,*" as giving him this exemption, unless it was from dues owing to God, and not to Cesar, that by the preceding process of argument he was claiming his freedom. As a Son in his own house, he affirmed his exemption from the first. How could he *on this ground* have claimed immunity from the last? on the ground, that is, of being the son of him on whose behalf the tax was claimed. For he was no son of Cesar. He might indeed have asserted his immunity on other grounds, though *that* he would not, since he had come submitting himself during his earthly life to every ordinance of man. But this claim which he does put forward, only holds good on the supposition that the payment is one made to God. They who maintain the contrary interpretation are driven to say that it is his royal Davidical descent, on the score of which he claims this immunity. But neither can this stand: for the argument then would be, that because Jesus is one king's son, therefore he is exempted from the tribute owing to another king, and that other, one of a hostile dynasty,—in itself a most insufficient argument, and certainly not that of the sacred text: "*Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.*"\*

We may presume, then, that our Lord and Peter, with others also, it is most probable, of his disciples, were now returning to Capernaum, which was "his city," after one of their usual absences.† The Lord passed forward without question, but the collectors detained Peter, who, having lingered a little behind, was now following his Lord. Chrysostom suggests that their question may be a rude and ill-mannered one: "Does your Master count himself exempt from the payment of the ordinary dues? we know his freedom: does he mean to exercise it here?" yet on the other hand it may have been, as I should suppose it was, the exact contrary. Having seen or heard of the wonderful works which Christ did, they may really have been uncertain in what light to regard

passage, observes this: *Exactores Romani acerbius haud dubie exegissent tributum Cæsari solvendum.* And in the Rabbinical treatise especially relating to the manner of collecting these dues, it is said: *Placide à quovis semisiclum expetierunt.* Grotius: *Credibile est multos, quia non cogebantur, id onus detrectasse.*

\* Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.*, l. 1, qu. 23,) helps it out in another way: *In omni regno terreno intelligendum est liberos esse regni filios . . . Multò ergo magis liberi esse debent in quolibet regno terreno filii regni illius, sub quo sunt omnia regna terrena.*

† See Mr. GRESWELL'S *Dissertations*, v. 2, p. 374, seq.

him, whether to claim from him the money or not, and in this doubting and inquiring spirit, they may have put the question to Peter. This Theophylact suggests. But after all, we want that which the history has not given, the *tone* in which the question was put, to know whether it was a rude one or the contrary. To their demand Peter, overhasty, as was so often the case, at once replied that his master would pay the money. No doubt zeal for his master's honor made him so quick to pledge his Lord: he was confident that his piety would make him prompt to every payment sanctioned and sanctified by God's Law.

Yet at the same time there was here on the part of the apostle a failing to recognize the higher dignity of his Lord: it was not in this spirit that he had said a little while before, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He understood not, or at least for the time had lost sight of, his Lord's true position and dignity, that he was a Son over his own house,\* not a servant in another's house—that he was the Head of the theocracy, not one of its subordinate members, so that it was *to* him in his Father that payments were to be made, not *from* him to be received. This last had been out of all reason; for he who was to be a ransom for all other souls, could not properly give a ransom for his own.\* It was not for him who was "greater than the temple," and himself the true temple, (John ii. 21,) identical with it according to its spiritual significance, and in whom the Shechinah glory dwelt, to pay dues for the support of that other temple built with hands, which was now fast losing its significance, since the true tabernacle was set up, which the Lord had pitched and not man.

It is then for the purpose of bringing back Peter, and with him the other disciples, to the true recognition of himself, from which they had in part fallen, that the Lord puts to him the question which follows; and being engaged, through Peter's hasty imprudence, to the rendering of the didrachm, which now he could scarcely recede from, yet did it in the remarkable way of this present miracle—a miracle which should testify that all things served him, from the greatest to the least, even to the fishes that walked through the paths of the sea,—that he was Lord over nature, and having nothing, yet in his Father's care for him, was truly possessed of all things.† Here, as so often in the life of our Lord.

\* Ambrose (*Ep.* 7, c. 12, *Ad Justum*): Hoc est igitur didrachma, quod exigebatur secundum legem: sed non debebat illud filius regis, sed alienus. Quid enim se Christus redimeret ab hoc mundo, qui venerat ut tolleret peccatum mundi? Quid se à peccato redimeret, qui descenderat, ut omnibus peccatum dimitteret? . . . Quid se redimeret à morte, qui carnem susceperat, ut morte suâ omnibus resurrectionem adquireret? Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* xlvi. 14.

† The grand poem which Tholuck has translated from the Persian Mystic (*Blit-*

the depth of his poverty and humiliation is lightened up by a gleam of his glory. And thus, by the manner of the payment, did he re-assert the true dignity of his person, which else by the payment itself might have been obscured and compromised in the eyes of some, but which it was of all importance for the disciples that they should not lose sight of or forget. The miracle, then, was to supply a real need,—slight, indeed, as an outward need, for the money could assuredly have been in some other and more ordinary ways procured; but as an inner need, most real: in this, then, differing in its essence from the apocryphal miracles, which are continually mere sports and freaks of power, having no ethical motive or meaning whatever.

And we may see this purpose of our Lord's coming clearly out from the very first. He did not wait for Peter to inform him what he had done, and to what he had engaged him; but as soon as "*he was come into the house, Jesus prevented,*" or anticipated, his communication, showing that he was acquainted with it already,—that he was a discerner of the thoughts of the heart,—that it was for him, as though he had been present at that conversation between his disciple and the collectors of the money.\* Preventing him thus, he said, "*What thinkest thou, Simon? on what principle hast thou been promising this for me? is not all the analogy of things earthly against it? Of whom do the kings of the earth,*" (with an emphasis on these last words, for there is a silent contrasting of these with the King of heaven, as at Ps. ii. 2,) "*take*

*thensammlung aus der Morgenl. Myst., p. 148,*) tells exactly the same story, namely, that all nature waits on him who is the friend of God, so that all things are his, and his seeming poverty is but another side of his true riches; only that what there is only in idea, is here clothed in the flesh and blood of an actual fact. I can give but a most inadequate extract:

Adham Ibrahim sass einst am Meeresstrand,  
Nächte dort als Bettler sich sein Mönchsgewand.  
Plötzlich tritt ein Emir mit Gefolg' ihn an,  
Der vormals dem Seelenkönig unterthan,  
Küsst den Fuss ihm, und wird alsobald verwirrt,  
Da den Scheich er in der Kutt' ansichtig wird.  
Den, dem einst gehorcht' ein weites Landgebiet,  
Staunend er jetzt seine Kutte näh'n sieht.

\* \* \* \*

Drauf' der Scheich die Nadel plötzlich wirft in's Meer.  
Ruft dann laut: Ihr Fische, bringt die Nadel her!  
Als bald ragen hunderttausend Köpff' hervor,  
Jeder Fisch bringt eine goldne Nadel vor.  
Nun der Scheich mit Ernst sich zu dem Emir kehrt:  
Wanderst du dich noch, dass ich die Kutt' begehrt?

\* Jerome: Antequàm Petrus suggeret, Dominus interrogat, ne scandalizentur discipuli ad postulationem tributi, quum videant eum nosse quæ absente se gesta sunt.

*custom or tribute?*"\* Christ argues here from the less to the greater, from things earthly to things heavenly, not as though the things earthly could prove the things heavenly; but, since those are the shadows of these, from the shadow concluding the form of the substance. And when Peter confessed that it was not of their own children, but "*of strangers,*"† then at once he brought him to the conclusion whither he was leading him, that "*the children,*" or as it would be better, "*the sons,*" were "*free.*"‡

But this plural, "*the sons,*" and not "*the Son,*" has sometimes been brought against the interpretation, which would make our Lord to have had himself and himself only, as the only-begotten Son of God, in his eye when he thus spake. Yet it is obvious that while he is making a general statement of the worldly relations from which he borrows his analogy, and by which he is helping the understanding of his disciples, as there might be not merely one but many sons to a worldly king, or as there are many kings of whom he is speaking, so was it natural for him to throw his speech into a plural form; and it is just as natural, when we come to the heavenly order of things which is there shadowed forth, to restrain it to the singular, to the one Son; since to the King of heaven, who is set against the kings of the earth, there is but one, the only-begotten of the Father.§ And the explanation, namely, that he

\* Κήρυκος, the capitation tax; τέλη, customs or tolls on goods.

† There is no doubt a difficulty in finding exactly the right translation for ἀλλοτρίων. For it is not so strong as our "*strangers,*" or the *alieni* of the Vulgate, or Luther's von Fremden. It means to express no more than those that are not the *οἰοί*, that stand not in this nearest and most immediate relation to the king (qui non pertinent ad familiam Regis; Kuinoel). So Hammond, "other folk," and De Wette, von ihren Söhnen, [which is better than Luther's von ihren Kindern,] oder von den andern Leuten. Compare for this use of ἀλλοτρίος, Sirac. xl. 29. Gfrörer, (*Die Heil. Sage*, v. 2, p. 56,) stumbling at the whole account, finds fault with this interpretation, because forsooth the Jews were not ἀλλοτρίοι,—as though they were not so in comparison with Christ; and, again, because they too were *οἰοί* Οεοῦ,—as though they were so in any such sense as he was. It is most true that from his standing point, to whom there is nothing in Christ different from another man, the narrative does, in his own words, "suffer under incurable difficulties."

‡ With a play on the words, which is probably much more than a mere play, and rests upon a true etymology, so witnessing for the very truth which Christ is asserting here, we might say in Latin, *Liberi sunt liberi.* (*Liberi*, the children, so called in opposition to the household, the *servi*: FREUND'S *Lat. Wörterbuch*, s. v. *liber.*) 'Those very words do occur in the noble Easter hymn beginning,

Cedant justis signa luctus.

§ Grotius observes rightly that it is the *locus communis*, which is to account for the plural: *Plurali numero utitur, non quod ad alios eam extendat libertatem, sed quod comparatio id exigebat, sumta non ab unius sed ab omnium Regum more ac con-*



intends to extend the liberty to his people, to all that in this secondary sense are the sons of God, cannot be admitted: for it is not the fact concerning dues owing to God. Nor even if this discourse had relation to a civil payment, would it be true; however such an interpretation might be welcome to Anabaptists,\* having found favor also with some of the extreme Romish canonists, as an argument for the exemption of the clergy from payments to the state, although others among themselves truly remark that it must include all the faithful or none.† It is not thus, not as one of many, not as the first among many sons, but as the true and only Son of God, he claims this liberty for himself; and “we may observe, by the way, that the reasoning itself is a strong and convincing testimony to the proper Sonship, and in the capacity of Son to the proper relationship of Jesus Christ to the Father, which those who deny that relationship will not easily evade or impugn.‡ There is in these words the same implicit assertion of Christ’s relation to God as a different one from that of other men, which there is throughout the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, in the distinction which is so

suetudine. The best defence of the cleaving to the plural in the application of the words is that made by Cocceius: Christus ostendit nec se, qui Filius Dei est, obligari ad didrachma solvendum, tanquam λότρον animæ suæ, nec suos discipulos, qui ab ipso hæreditant libertatem, et non argento redimuntur (Es. lii. 3,) sed precioso ipsius sanguine (1 Pet. i. 18, 19,) et facti sunt filii Dei vivi (Hos. i. 10,) amplius teneri ad servitutem figuræ. Olshausen follows him in this.

\* The Anabaptist conclusions which might be drawn from an abuse of the passage, are met on right general grounds by Aquinas (*Sum. Theol.*, 2<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>a</sup>æ, 104, art. 6,) though he has not any very precise insight into the meaning of this history. Milton (*Defence of the People of England*, c. 3) makes exceedingly unfair use of this passage.

† Tirinus (in loc.): Nam pari jure omnes justi, immo omnes Christiani exempti essent. Michaelis affirms that others too have pushed these words to the asserting the same liberty; for he tells a story (*Mosaische Recht*, v. 3, p. 210,) of having himself, in travelling, seen a Pietist cheat the revenue before his eyes; and when he asked him how he could find conscience to do so, the other defended himself with these words. “*Then are the children free.*” The story is, unhappily, only too welcome to him.

‡ GRESWELL’S *Dissert.*, v. 2, p. 736. Chrysostom uses the same argument. I know not whether any use was made of this passage in the Arian controversy by those who were upholding the Catholic faith; but Hilary, a confessor and standard-bearer for the truth in that great conflict, does distinctly bring out how the Godhead of Christ is involved in this argument (*Comm. in Matth.*, in loc.): Didrachma tanquam ab homine poscebatur à Christo. Sed ut ostenderet Legi se non esse subjectum, ut in se paternæ dignitatis gloriam contestaretur, terreni privilegii posuit exemplum: censu aut tributis regum filios non teneri, potiusque se redemptorem animæ nostræ corporisque esse quàm in redemptionem sui aliquid postulandum; quia Regis Filium: extra communionem oporteret esse reliquorum.

markedly drawn between the son and the servants of the householder: and these statements on the matter, which are thus, as it were, bedded deep in Scripture, assumed as the foundation of further superstructures, not lying on the surface, or contained in single isolated expressions, will always carry with them a peculiar weight. It is true that for the unbelieving, for those that are determined not to be convinced, there is always a loop-hole of escape, as from other declarations, so also from these; in the present instance, the plural "*sons*" affords for those who seek it the desired opportunity of evasion.

But under this protest Christ will pay the money; "*Lest we should offend them*, lest they should say we despise the temple, or should count that we are come to destroy the law,"—lest they who knew not the awful secret of his birth, should imagine that he was using a false liberty;\* or even lest it might appear unseemly if he went back from that to which his follower had engaged him, he will pay it. Thus will he provide things honest in the sight of men. There was no need, only a becomingness, in the payment; in the same way as there was no necessity for his baptism; it was that whereto of his own choice he willingly submitted; nor yet for the circumcision which he received in his flesh; but he took on him the humiliations of the law, that he might deliver from under the law. And here comes out the deeper meaning of the Lord not paying for himself only, but for Peter, the representative of all the faithful,—"*for me and for thee*;"—he came under the same yoke with men, that they might enter into the same freedom which was his.† But, as on other occasions, at his presentation in the temple, (Luke ii. 22—14,) and again at his baptism, there was something more than common which should hinder the misunderstanding of that which was done:—at the presentation, in Simeon's song and Anna's thanksgiving: at the baptism, first in John's reluctance to baptize him, and

\* Chrysostom (*Hom. 61 in Joh.*) understands in a remarkably different way these words, "*Lest we should offend them*;" lest, when this secret of our heavenly birth, and our consequent exemption from tribute is told them, they should be unable to receive it; lest we should thus put a stumbling-block in their way, revealing to them something which they were altogether unable to receive.

† Ambrose (*Ep. 7, c. 18, Ad Justum*): Ideo didrachmum solvi jubet pro se et Petro, quia uterque sub Lege generati. Jubet ergo secundum Legem solvi, ut eos qui sub Lege erant redimeret. And Augustine, on the words which he found Ps. cxxxvii. 8: Domine, retribuens pro me, adduces this history, saying, Nihil debebat: pro se non reddidit, sed pro nobis reddidit; and again, (*Serm. 155, c. 7*): Mysterium latebat: Christus tamen tributum non debitum persolvebat. Sic persolvit et mortem; non debebat, et persolvebat. Ille nisi indebitum solveret, nunquam nos a debito liberaret. Jerome (*Comm. in Matth., in loc.*): Ut ostenderetur similitudo carnis, dum eodum et servus et Dominus pretio liberatur.

then in the opened heaven and the voice from thence ;—so also is there here a protest of Christ's immunity from the present payment, first in his own words, "*Then are the children free,*" and next in the novel method by which he supplies the emergent need.\*

For putting back Peter to his old vocation, he says, "*Go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up ;† and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money,*" or "a stater," as it is in the margin. It is remarkable, and a solitary instance of the kind, that the issue of the bidding is not told us: but we are, of course, meant to understand that at his Lord's command Peter resumed his old occupation, went to the neighboring lake, cast in his hook, and in the mouth of the first fish that rose to it, found, according to his Lord's word, the money that was needed. "*That take,‡ and give unto them for me and thee.*"§ He says not "for us," but as elsewhere, "I ascend unto *my* Father and *your* Father; and to *my* God and *your* God," (John xxv. 17,) so does he use the same language here; for while he has made common part with his brethren, yet he has done this by an act of condescension, not by a necessity of nature; and for them it greatly imports that they should not confound the two, but see ever clearly that here is a delivered and a deliverer, a ransomed and a ransomer, however to the natural eye it may seem that there are two who alike are ransomed.

\* Bengel: In medio actu submissionis emicat majestas. And Clarius: Reddii ergo censum, sed ex ore piscis acceptum, ut agnoscatur majestas. So too Origen (*Comm. in Matth.*, in loc.) recognizes a saving of the Lord's dignity in the mode of the payment. Of course, when we speak of this saving of his dignity, it is of a saving, not for his own sake, but for men's, since it is most important for them that they think not unworthily of him. In other cases, where misapprehension was possible, we find a like care for this. (John xi. 41, 42.)

† This does not mean the first that he *drew up* with his line, but the first that *ascended* from the deeper waters to his hook.

‡ Moule (*Heraldry of Fish*) gives the natural mythology connected with this miracle. He says, "A popular idea assigns the dark marks on the shoulders of the haddock to the impression left by St. Peter with his finger and thumb, when he took the tribute-money out of the fish's mouth at Capernaum; but the haddock certainly does not now exist in the seas of the country where the miracle was performed . . . The dory, called St. Peter's fish in several countries of Europe, contends with the haddock the honor of bearing the marks of the apostle's fingers, an impression transmitted to posterity as a perpetual memorial of the miracle. The name of the dory is hence asserted to be derived from the French *adoré*, worshipped."

§ Observe the ἀντὶ ἐμοῦ καὶ σοῦ, (cf. *Matth.*, xx. 28.)—another proof that we have here to do with the ransom *for* persons, a price given *in their stead*, with a reference to the original institution of this payment, and so another argument, if that were needed, for the correctness of the view maintained at the outset.

As has been observed on the miraculous draught of fishes, the miracle does not lie only in the foreknowledge on the Lord's part that so it should be in the first fish which came up, for it was not merely that he foreknew the fact; but he himself, by the mysterious potency of his will, which ran through all nature, drew the particular fish to that spot at that moment, and ordained that it should swallow the hook. Compare Jon. i. 17, "The Lord *had prepared* a great fish to swallow up Jonah." Thus we see the sphere of animal life unconsciously obedient to his will; that also is not *out* of God, but moves *in* him, as does every other creature. (1 Kin. xiii. 24; xx. 36; Amos ix. 3.)

All attempts to get rid of a miracle, and to make the Evangelist to be telling, and meaning to tell, an ordinary transaction, as the scheme for instance of Paulus, who will have it that the Lord bade Peter go and catch as many fish as would sell for the required sum, and who maintains that this actually lies in the words,—all such, it is at once evident, are hopelessly absurd.\* Yet, on the other hand, it is an idle

\* His honesty and his Greek keep admirable company. Ποῶτον ἰχθῶν he takes collectively, primum quemque piscem, ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ solvens eum ab hamo, εὐόησεις στατήρα vendendo piscem statera tibi comparabis. This has not even the merit of novelty; for I find the same scheme mentioned in KÖCHER'S *Analecta* (in loc.), published in 1766: Piscem capies quem pro statera vendere poteris. In a later work, however, Paulus desires to amend his plea, and ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα is no longer, opening the fish's mouth to take out the hook, but, opening thine own mouth, *i. e.*, crying the fish for sale, αὐτοῦ (adverbially) there, upon the spot, εὐόησεις στατήρα thou wilt earn a stater. Another of the same school (see Kuinoel, *in loc.*) will have that the whole speech is a playful irony on the Lord's part, whereby he would show Peter the impossible payment to which he has pledged him, when money they had none in hand; as though he had said, "The next thing which you had better do is to go and catch us a fish, and find in it the piece of money which is to pay this tax for which you have engaged,"—not as meaning that he should actually do this, but as a slight and kindly rebuke. It was reserved, however, for the yet more modern or mythic school of interpreters to find other difficulties here besides the general one of there being a miracle at all. "How," exclaims one of the chiefest of these, (STRAUSS, *Leben Jesu*, v. 2, p. 195,) "could the fish retain the stater in its mouth? the coin must needs have dropt out while it was opening its jaws to swallow the hook; and, moreover, it is not in the mouths, but in the bellies, of fishes that precious things are commonly found." Such is the objection against which this history is to prove too weak to stand! It can only be matched with the objection which another interpreter makes to the historic accuracy of the account of Daniel and the lions' den; namely, that if a stone was laid at the mouth of the den, the lions must needs have been suffocated,—so that nothing will satisfy him but that the den's mouth must have been by this stone hermetically sealed. Surely to anticipate the above difficulty, and to evade it, Juvencus gives ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα, with this variation,

Hujus pandantur scissi penetralia ventris!

and unwarranted multiplication of miracles, to assume that the stater was created for the occasion,\* and it is in fact a stepping out of the region of miracle altogether into that of absolute creation; for in the miracle, as distinguished from the act of pure creation, there is always a nature-basis to which the divine power which works the wonder, more or less closely links itself. That divine power which dwelt in Christ, restored, as in the case of the sick and blind; it multiplied, as the bread in the wilderness; it ennobled, as the water at Cana; it quickened, as Lazarus and others; it brought together, as here, by wonderful coincidences, the already existing; but, as far as we can see, it formed no new limbs; it made no bread, no wine, out of nothing; it created no new men: it did not, as far as our records reach, pass over on any one occasion into the region of absolute creation.†

The allegorical interpretations, or rather uses, of this miracle, for they are seldom meant for more, have not in them much to attract, neither that of Clement,‡ with which Theophylact mainly agrees, that each skilful fisher of men will, like Peter, remove the coin of pride and avarice and luxury, from the mouth of them whom they have drawn up by the hook of the Gospel from the waste waters of the world; nor yet that which St. Ambrose brings forward, wherein the stater plays altogether a different, indeed, an opposite part;§ nor has Augustine's|| more to draw forth our assent. The miracle is rich enough already in meaning and in teaching, without our seeking to press it further.

\* So does Seb. Schmidt (*Fuscic. Diss.*, p. 796.) Chrysostom (*Hom. 87 in Joh.*), has a like explanation of the fish which the disciples find ready upon the shore (John xxi. 9); in the same way many assume that Christ not merely gave sight to, but made organs of vision for, the man who was born blind. (John ix.)

† The accounts are numerous of precious things being found in the bellies of fishes. The story of Polycrates' ring is well known; (HEROD., l. 3, c. 42;) and in Jewish legend Solomon, having lost his ring of power, recovered it in the same unexpected way. (EISENMENGER'S *Entdeckt. Judenth.*, v. 1, p. 360.) Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, l. 22, c. 8,) gives the account of a like incident in his own day, in which he sees a providential dealing of God to answer the prayer, and supply the need, of one of his servants.

‡ *Pædag.*, l. 2, v. 1, p. 172, Potter's ed. Cf. ORIGEN, *Comm. in Matth.*, for the same.

§ *Hexaem.*, l. 5, c. 6: Ideò misit retia, et complexus est Stephanum, qui de Evangelio primus ascendit [τὸν ἀναβάνατα πρώτου] habens in ore suo staterem justitiæ. Unde confessione constanti clamavit, dicens: Ecce video cœlos apertos, et Filium hominis stantem ad dexteram Dei. So HILARY, *Comm. in Matth.*, in loc.

|| *Enarr. in Ps. cxxxvii. 8*: Primum surgentem de mari, primogenitum à mortuis, for by him, he says, with the error which runs through his whole interpretation, ab exactione hujus seculi liberamur.

## XXIX.

### THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

JOHN xi. 1—54.

THE fact of this miracle being passed over altogether by the first three Evangelists,—a miracle so memorable in itself, so weighty too in its consequences, since the final and absolute determination to put the Lord out of the way resulted immediately from it,—this must ever remain a mystery: the utmost that can be hoped is to suggest some probable solution of the omission. The following among the explanations which have been offered have found most favor. First, It has been said by some that the three earlier Evangelists, writing in Palestine, and while Lazarus was yet alive, or at least while some of his family yet survived, would not willingly draw attention, and it might be, persecution upon them; but that no such causes hindered St. John, who wrote at a much later period, and out of Palestine, from bringing forward this miracle. The omission on their part, and the mention upon his, will then be a parallel to a like omission and mention in regard of the disciple who actually smote off the ear of the high priest's servant. Only St. John mentions that it was Peter who did it. (xviii. 10.) This is Olshausen's view, and that of Grotius before him, who refers to John xii. 11, in proof of the danger that ensued to Lazarus from being this living witness of Christ's power. But how far-fetched a theory is this! At the furthest it would apply only to the Gospel of St. Matthew; that of St. Mark was probably written at Rome, and for the Gentile Christians, certainly not in Palestine; as little was that of St. Luke, which was addressed to his friend Theophilus, whom many intimations in that Gospel would make us conclude to have lived in Italy. Moreover, the existence of that danger, and of those snares against his life, while the miracle and the impression of the miracle were yet fresh, is no proof of

their existence long years after. The tide of things had swept onward; new objects of hostility had arisen:—not to say that if there *was* danger, and if the danger would have been thus augmented, yet Lazarus was now a Christian, and would not have shrunk from that danger, nor would those who truly loved him have desired to save him from the post of honorable peril. For what else would it have been, but to have shrunk from confessing Christ, for him to have desired that a work which revealed so much of the glory of the Lord should remain untold, lest some persecution or danger might from the telling accrue to himself?

Others again, feeling this explanation to be insufficient, have observed how the three earlier Evangelists have confined themselves almost entirely to the miracles that the Lord wrought in Galilee, leaving those wrought in Jerusalem and its neighborhood nearly untouched, and that so they came to omit this.\* It is perfectly true that they did so. But this is not explaining, it is only stating in other words the fact which has to be explained; and the question still remains, Why they should have done so? and to this it is difficult to find now the satisfactory answer.

In the house of Martha at Bethany, for St. Luke (x. 38) speaks of her as if alone the mistress of the house, the Lord had often found a hospitable reception; and not in the house only; he had found too a place in the hearts of the united and happy family which abode under that roof; and he loved with a peculiar human affection "*Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.*"† It was to Bethany, after the day's task was over in the hostile city, that probably he was often wont to retire for the night; (Mark xi. 11—19;) its immediate nearness to the city,—it

\* Thus NEANDER, *Leben Jesu*, p. 357.

† Here, as throughout the Evangelical history, there is an exceeding scantiness in all the circumstantial notices concerning the persons mentioned; that only being related which was absolutely necessary to make the history intelligible; and all attention being directed to the portraying the spiritual life and what bore upon this. Whether Martha was an early widow, with whom her sister, and Lazarus, a younger brother, resided, or what other may have been the constitution of the household, it is impossible to determine.—I cannot at all consent with Mr. Greswell's ingenious essay, On the village of Martha and Mary, (*Dissert.*, v. 2, p. 545,) of which the aim is to prove that in St. John's designation of Lazarus, ἀπὸ Βηθανίας means one thing, the present place of his residence, and ἐκ τῆς κώμης Μαρίας καὶ Μάρθας another, the village of his birth, which he accounts to have been some Galilæan village, where the Lord had before been entertained by the sisters, (Luke x. 38,) and from whence they had migrated to Bethany, during the later period of his ministry;—well worthy as the essay is of perusal.

was not more than fifteen furlongs distant,—allowing him to return thither betimes in the morning. And in the circle of this family, with Mary, who “sat at his feet and heard his words,” with Martha, who was only divided between this and a desire to pay as much outward honor as she could to her divine guest, with Lazarus his friend, we may think of him as often wont to find rest and refreshment, after a day spent amid the contradiction of sinners, and among the men who daily mistook and wrested his words.

But now there has fallen a cloud upon this happy household of love ; for not they even whom Christ loves are exempt from their share of earthly trouble and anguish ; rather are they bound over to it the more surely. Lazarus is sick ; and the sisters in their need turn to him, whom, it may be, they have themselves proved to be a helper in every time of trouble, whom at any rate they have beheld to be such in the extremest needs of others. He is at a distance, beyond Jordan, probably at Bethabara, having withdrawn thither from the fury of his adversaries ; (John x. 39, 40 ; cf. John i. 28 ;) but the place of his concealment, or retirement rather, is known to the friendly family, and they send a messenger with these tidings, “*Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.*” Very beautiful is it to observe their confidence in him ; they take it for granted that this announcement will be sufficient, and say no more ; they do not urge him to come ; they only tell their need, as being sure that this will be enough ; he does not love, and forsake them whom he loves.\* It is but a day’s journey from Bethabara to Bethany, so that they securely count that help will not tarry long.

The words with which the Lord receives the message, and which we are to take as spoken, in the hearing indeed of the apostles, yet primarily to the messenger, and for him to bring back to them that sent him, — *This sickness is not unto death,*† are purposely enigmatical, and must greatly have tried the faith of the sisters. For by the time that the messenger returned, it is probable that Lazarus was already dead. Sorely therefore must this confident assurance that the issue of the sickness should not be death, have perplexed them. Could it be that their divine friend had deceived them, or had been himself deceived ? Why had he not made the issue certain by himself coming, or, if aught had hindered that, by speaking that word which even at a distance was effectual to heal, that word which he had spoken for others, for those

\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh., Tract.* 40): Non dixerum, Veni. Amanti enim tantummodo nuntiandum fuit . . . Sufficit ut noveris ; non enim amas, et deseris.

† *ἡσυχία θανάτου.* So 1 John v. 16 ; cf. 1 Kin. xvii. 17 ; and 2 Kin. xx. 1 (LXX.), where of Hezekiah it is said, *ἠρρώσθησθην ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ.*



that were well nigh strangers to him, and they had been saved? But as with so many other of the divine promises, which seem to us for the moment to come to nothing and utterly to fail, and this because we so little dream of the resources of the divine love, and are ever limiting them by our knowledge of them, so was it with this word,—a perplexing riddle, till the event had made it plain. Even now, in the eyes of him who saw the end from the beginning, that sickness was not unto death; as they too should acknowledge that it was not, when they should find that death was not to be its last issue, but only a moment of transition to a restored, and a higher life than any which yet Lazarus had lived;—a higher life, for when Christ declares the meaning of that sickness, that it was “*for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby,*” he certainly includes in this “*glory of God*” the perfecting for Lazarus of his own spiritual being, as we cannot doubt that it *was* perfected through these wondrous events of his existence. This was his hard yet blessed passage into life. That which was the decisive crisis in his spiritual development was also a signal moment in the gradual revelation of the glory of Christ unto the world. The Son of God was first glorified *in* Lazarus, and then on him, and through him to the world. (Compare the exact parallel, John ix. 2, 3.)

It has been sometimes proposed to connect ver. 5 with what goes before, so making it to contain an explanation of the message, and of the ready confidence which the sisters show in the Lord's help; or sometimes, as by Olshausen, with the verse following; and then St. John will be bringing out into the strongest contrast the Lord's love to the distressed family at Bethany, and his tarrying notwithstanding for two days where he was, even after the message claiming his help had reached him. The Evangelist will in that case be suggesting to the thoughtful reader all that is involved in this love which waited so long, ere it would step in to save. But I am inclined to think that Maldonatus has caught a truer view of the sequence of thought, when he connects this verse not with the *one*, but with the *two* which follow. He understands St. John to say, Jesus loved Martha and the others; when therefore he heard that Lazarus was sick, he abode indeed two days where he was, but “*then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again.*” To conceive any other reason for his tarrying where he was those two days, than that he might have room to work that great miracle, is highly unnatural. Sometimes it has been assumed that he had in hand some great work for the kingdom of God where he was, some work which would not endure to be left, and which therefore he could not quit for the most pressing calls of private friendship. (See x. 41, 42.) But he could have healed with his word at a distance as easily as

by his actual presence; and this tarrying was rather a part of the severe yet faithful discipline of divine love; he would let the need come to the highest before he interfered. We have frequent instances of the like. He comes in with his mighty help, but not till every other help has failed, till even *his* promise has seemed to the weak faith of men to have failed and come utterly to nothing.

But now, when all things are ready for him, he will return to Judea again. The wondering and trembling disciples remonstrate; it was but now that he escaped instant death at the hands of his Jewish foes; it was the necessity of withdrawing from their active malice which brought him here, and will he now affront that danger anew? In these their remonstrances with their Lord, their entreaties that he should not return to the scene of his former perils, there spake out indeed truest love to him; but with it were mingled apprehensions for their own safety, as is revealed in ver. 16, where Thomas takes it for granted that to return with him is to die with him. We must keep this in mind, if we would understand our Lord's answer to their remonstrance, "*Are there not twelve hours in the day?*" or, rather, "Are not the hours of the day twelve?"—in other words, "Is there not a time which is not cut short or abridged by premature darkness, but consists of twelve full hours,\* during any part of which a man may walk and work without stumbling, being enlightened by the light of this world, by the natural sun in the heavens? Such an unconcluded day there is now for me, a day during any part of which I can safely accomplish the work given me by my Father, whose light I, in like manner, behold. So long as the day, the time appointed by my Father for my earthly walk, endures, so long as there is any work for me yet to do, I am safe, and you are safe in my company." The passage which yields the most helps to fix its meaning, is the very similar one spoken under similar circumstances of danger, John ix. 4. And then, at ver. 10, leaving all allusion to himself and contemplating his disciples alone, he links another thought to this, and warns them that they never walk otherwise than as seeing him who is the Light of men,—they never walk as in the night,—they undertake no task, they affront no danger, unless looking to him, unless they can say, The Lord is my Light; for so to do were to involve themselves in

\* Maldoumtus: Certum esse atque statum spatium Dei, quod minui non possit; duodecim enim constare horis; intra id spatium si quis ambulat, sine periculo ambulare. Calvin: Vocatio Dei instar lucis diurnæ est, quæ nos errare vel impingere non patitur. Quisquis ergo Dei verbo obtemperat, nec quidquam aggreditur nisi ejus jussu, illum quoque habere cælo duccem et directorem, et hæc fiducia securè et intrepidè viam arripere potest. Cf. Ps. xc. 11. Grotius: Quantum ergo magis tutò ambulo, qui præluentem mihi habeo lucem supracælestem, ac divinam cognitionem Paterni propositi?

sure peril and temptation. The final words which explain why such a walker in the night should stumble, "*because there is no light in him,*" are a forsaking of the figure, which would have required something of this kind, "*there is no light above him ;*" but in the spiritual world it is one and the same thing not to see the light above us, and not to have it in us : for the having it here is only the reflex and the consequence of seeing it there. (Cf. 1 John ii. 8—11.)

We are not to suppose that the Lord receives new and later tidings from the house of sickness, announcing that it is now the house of death, and by this supposition to explain the new communication which he makes to his disciples. But by the inner power of his Spirit he knows how it has fared with his friend ; "*Lazarus is dead,*" or, as Christ first expresses it, speaking in the heavenly tongue, "*sleepeth ;*" "*but I go,*" he adds, "*that I may awake him out of sleep.*" Thus simply does he speak of the mighty work which he is about to accomplish ; so does he use concerning it a language which shall rather extenuate than exalt its greatness : it is but as a sleep and an awaking. The disciples, however, misunderstood his words, and thought that he spake of natural sleep, an indication often of a favorable crisis in a disorder, and which they assume to be such here ; "*Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.*"\* What need then, they would imply, that their beloved Lord should expose himself and them to peril, when his presence was not required, when all was going favorably forward without him ? Hereupon the Lord explained to them that he spake of another sleep, even the sleep of death, from which he was going to awaken Lazarus. The image of death as a sleep is so common, belongs so to the natural symbolism of all nations, that it was no difficulty in the image itself which occasioned the misunderstanding upon their part ; but while it was equally possible for them to take his words in a figurative or in a literal sense, they erroneously took them in the latter.† They make an exactly similar mis-

\* So Chrysostom, and Grotius: Discipuli omnimodò quærunt Dominum ab isto itinere avocare. Ideo omnibus utuntur argumentis.

† The use of the term *κοιμησθαι* in this sense is abundantly frequent in the Old Testament, and not less in the New, as Matt. xxvii. 52 ; Acts vii. 60 ; xiii. 36 ; 1 Cor. vii. 39 ; xi. 30 ; xv. 6, 18, 20, 51 ; 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14, 15 ; 2 Pet. iii. 4. So we have *κοίμησις* for the sleep of death, Sirac. xlvi. 19. There is but one example of a use of *ἐξυπνίζειν*, similar to the present, namely, in the remarkable passage, Job xiv. 12 : Ἄνθρωπος δὲ κοιμηθεὶς οὐ μὴν ἀναστῆ ἕως ἂν ὁ οὐρανὸς οὐ μὴ σὺρμαφῆ, καὶ οὐκ ἐξυπνισθήσονται, ἐξ ὑπνου αὐτῶν. The nearest motive to this image may probably have been the likeness of a dead body to one sleeping. Yet there may well lie in it a deeper thought, of the state of the dead being that of a sleep—not indeed a dreamless sleep ; but the separation of the soul from the body as the appointed and indeed necessary organ of its ac-

take, though one involving a greater lack of spiritual insight, Matt. xvi. 5—12. “*Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead ;*” anticipating at the same time a difficulty which might have risen up in their minds, namely, why he was not there to save him. Through his absence there should be a higher revelation of the glory of God than could have been from his earlier presence; one that should lead them, and in them all the Church, to higher stages of faith, to a deeper recognition of himself, as the Lord of life and of death: “*I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that you may believe.*” He is glad that he was not there, for had he been upon the spot he could not have suffered the distress of those that were so dear to him to reach the highest point, but must have interfered at an earlier moment.

When he proposes to go to him now, it is plain that in the mind of one of the disciples at least the anticipation of death, as the certain consequence of going, is not overcome. In the words of Thomas to his fellow-disciples,\* when he finds the perilous journey determined on, “*Let us also go, that we may die with him,*” there is a remarkable mixture of faith and unfaithfulness,—faith, since he counted it better to die with his Lord, than to live forsaking him,—unfaithfulness, since he conceived it possible that so long as his Lord had a work to accomplish, he or those in his company could be overtaken by any peril which should require them to die together. Thomas was, most probably, of a melancholic, desponding character; most true to his Master, yet ever inclined to look at things on their darkest side, finding it most hard to raise himself to the standing point of faith,—to believe other and more than what he saw, (John xiv. 5; xx. 25,)—to anticipate higher and more favorable issues than those which the earthly probabilities of an event promised.† Men of all temperaments and all characters were within that first and nearest circle of disciples, that they might be the repre-

tivity, may and must bring about, not a suspension, but a depression, of the consciousness. Wherefore the state of the soul apart from the body is never considered in the Scripture as itself desirable, nor as other than a state of transition, the Scripture acknowledging no true immortality apart from the resurrection of the body: (See OLSHAUSEN, *in loc.*)

\* Συμπαθητής is used but in this once in the New Testament. Grotius makes *μητ' αὐτῶν*, with Lazarus; but *ἀποθνήσκειν μετ' αὐτῶν*, as Maldonatus well brings out, indicates fellowship not merely in death, but *in dying*, which was impossible in the case of Lazarus, who was already dead. I know no other interpreter who shares this view.

† Maldonatus: Theodor. Mopsuest. Chrys. et Euthymius rectè fortasse indicant hæc verba, quamvis magnam audaciæ speciem præ se ferant, non audacis sed timidi esse hominis, amantis tamen Christum, à quo cum certum mortis, ut putabat, periculum avertere non posset. Bengel: Erat quasi medius inter hanc vitam et mortem, sine tristitiâ et sine lætitiâ paratus ad moriendum; not tamen sine fide.

sentatives and helpers of all that hereafter, through one difficulty and another, should attain at last to the full assurance of faith. Very beautifully Chrysostom\* says of this disciple, that he who now would hardly venture to go *with* Jesus as far as to the neighboring Bethany, afterwards *without* him travelled to the ends of the world, to the farthest India, daring all the perils of remote and hostile nations.

Martha and Mary had not, probably, ventured to send to the Lord for help, till the sickness of their brother had assumed a most alarming character, and he had most likely died upon the same day that the messenger announcing his illness had reached the Lord, else he would scarcely have been four days in his grave when Jesus came. The day of the messenger's arrival on this calculation would be one day; two our Lord abode in Peræa after he had dismissed him, and one more he would have consumed in the journey from thence to Bethany;—for it was not more than the journey of a single day from the one place to the other. Dying upon that day, he had, according to the custom of the Jews, which made the burial immediately to follow on the death, been buried upon the same day, as a comparison of this verse with ver. 39 clearly shows.† (Cf. Acts v. 6—10.)

But before the arrival of him, the true Comforter, other comforters, some formal, all weak, had arrived.‡ It was part of the Jewish ceremonial of grief, which was all most accurately defined,§ that there should be numerous visits of condolence, a great gathering of friends and acquaintance, not less than ten, as in the case of a marriage com-

\* In *Joh.*, *Hom.* 62.

† This was speedier than with the Greeks, among whom a speedy burial was counted as an honor done to the dead; (see BECKER'S *Charikles*, v. 2, pp. 178, 179;) yet it did not take place generally till the second or third day after death. (See the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Ant.*, s. v. *Funus*.)

‡ St. John's mention of the nearness of Bethany to Jerusalem (not above two of our miles,) is to account for the fact that so many of the Jews from thence should have been assembled round Martha and Mary. 'Αἱ περὶ Μάρθαν καὶ Μαρίας, to signify Martha and Mary themselves and no other, is a Grecism of the finer sort, which is familiar to all. Olshausen, not denying this, is yet inclined to think that here the phrase may indicate that before the mourners from the comparatively more distant Jerusalem had arrived, there had already assembled some such, of their own sex, probably of their own kin, from Bethany itself, to whom the later coming joined themselves. Tholuck and Lücke take the same view of the phrase. Cf. Acts xiii. 13: Οἱ περὶ τὸν Παῦλον, "Paul and his company."

§ Thus the days of mourning were to be thirty, of these the three first were days of *weeping* (fletus); the seven next days of *lamentation* (planctus); and the remainder till the thirtieth, more generally of *mourning* (mœror).

pany, round those that were mourning for their dead; (1 Chron. vii. 22;) sometimes, and on the part of some, a reality, yet oftentimes also for the mourners a most weary and burdensome form.\* Job's comforters give witness how little sympathy there sometimes existed with the sufferers. At times, too, it was a bitter mockery, when the authors of the grief professed to be the comforters in it. (Gen. xxxvii. 35.) But now *he* comes, who could indeed comfort the mourners, and wipe away tears from the eyes. Yet he comes not to the house; that had been already occupied by those who were for the most part alien, if not hostile, to him: and not amid the disturbing influences of that uncongenial circle, would he have his first interview with the sorrowing sisters find place. Probably he tarried outside the town, and not very far from the spot where Lazarus was buried, as indeed seems implied by the supposition of the Jews, that when Mary went to meet him, she had gone to the grave. (ver. 31.) Abiding there, he may have suffered the tidings to go before him that he was near at hand.

When it is said that Martha, hearing of his approach, "*went and met him, but Mary sat still in the house,*" we are not in this hastening of the one, and tarrying of the other, to trace, as many have done,† the different characteristics of the two sisters, or to find a parallel here with Luke x. 39. For when Mary on that former occasion chose to sit still, it was because it was at the feet of Jesus that she was sitting; this nearness to him, and not the sitting still, was then the attraction. The same motives which kept her, on that other occasion, in stillness there, would now have brought her with the swift impulses of love to the place where Jesus was. And moreover, no sooner did Mary hear that her Lord was come than "*she arose quickly and came unto him,*" (ver. 29,) for it is evident that Martha's words, "*The Master is come, and calleth for thee,*" (ver. 28,) are the first intimation which Mary receives of the arrival of their heavenly friend. So Chrysostom, who says "It was not that Martha was now more zealous, but Mary had not heard." This much characteristic of the two sisters there may very probably be in the narrative, namely, that Martha, engaged in active employment even in the midst of her grief, may have been more in the way of hearing what was happening in the outer world, while Mary, in her deeper and stiller anguish, was sitting retired in the house, and less within the reach of such rumors.‡

\* See LIGHTFOOT, (in loc.) for the manner in which it had hardened into a dry and heartless formality.

† As Bengel, who here for once seems at fault, accounting for Mary's sitting still thus: *Erat animo sedatiore.* So also Tholuck.

‡ Maldonatus thinks that it is with this very purpose that her sitting still is

I know not whether it is an accident of the narration which is fuller at one place than at the other, or whether it belongs to the characteristic touches which escape us at the first glance, but of which Scripture is so full, that nothing should be said of Martha's falling at the Lord's feet, while this is noted of her sister. (ver. 32.) Martha too is ready to change words with Christ, but the deeper anguish of Mary finds utterance in that one phrase, the one thought which was uppermost in the heart of either: "*Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;*" and then she is silent. For it is the bitterest drop in their whole cup of anguish, that all this might have been otherwise: had this sickness befallen at another moment, when Christ was nearer, had he been able to hasten to their aid so soon as he was summoned, all might have been averted, they might have been rejoicing in a living, instead of mourning over a dead, brother. Yet even now Martha has not altogether renounced every hope, though she ventures only at a distance to allude to this hope which she is cherishing still. "*But I know that even now,*" now, when the grave was closed upon him, "*whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.*" High thoughts and poor thoughts of Christ mingle here together;—high thoughts, in that she sees him as one whose effectual fervent prayers will greatly prevail—poor thoughts, in that she thinks of him as *obtaining* by prayer what indeed he *has* by the oneness of his nature with God.\*

With words which yet are purposely ambiguous, being meant for the trying of her faith, Jesus assures her that the deep, though unuttered longing of her heart shall indeed be granted,—"*Thy brother shall rise again.*" But though her heart could take in the desire for so great a boon, it cannot take in its actual granting; it shrinks back half in unbelief from the receiving it.† She cannot believe that these words mean more than that he, with all other faithful Israelites, will stand in his lot at the last day; and with a slight movement of impatience at

mentioned ver. 20, as an explanation of her not having been in the way of hearing, and so not having heard, of our Lord's arrival, and therefore not hastening with her sister to meet him. He says: Quia enim dixerat Martham obviam Christo processisse, ne quis miraretur, aut Mariam accusaret quod non et ipsa processisset, excusat eam tacitè, dicens sedisse domi, ideoque nihil de Christi adventu cognovisse. Martha enim cognovit, quia credibile est domo aliquà causà fuisse progressam, et solent qui foris in publico versantur, multos colligere rumores, quos ignorant, qui domi delitescunt.

\* Grotius: Et hic infirmitas apparet. Putat illum gratiosum esse apud Deum, non autem in illo esse plenitudinem Divinæ potestatis.

† How remarkable an instance of the like we have, Acts xii. The Church could pray for Peter's deliverance (v. 5); but could not believe its prayer heard—and him delivered (ver. 15).

such cold comfort, comfort that so little met the present longings of her heart, which were to have her brother now, she answers, "*I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*" In all this there was much of carnal: hers was as yet an earthly love, clinging passionately to the earthly objects of its affection, and needing infinitely to be exalted and purified. Unless the Lord had lifted her into a higher region of life, it would have profited her little that he had granted her heart's desire.\* What would it have helped her to receive back her brother, if again she were presently to lose him, if once more they were to be parted asunder by his death or her own? This lower boon would only prove a boon at all, if he and she were both made partakers of a higher life in Christ; then indeed death would have no more power over them, then they would truly possess one another, and for ever: and to this the wondrously deep and loving words of Christ would lead her. They are no unseasonable preaching of truths remote from her present needs, but the answer to the very deepest need of her soul; they would lead her from a lost brother to a present Saviour, a Saviour in whom alone that brother could be truly and for ever found. "*I am the Resurrection and the Life; the true Life, the true Resurrection; the everlasting triumphs over death, they are in me*—no distant things, as thou spakest of now, to find place at the end of the world; no things separate or separable from me, as thou spakest of lately, when thou desiredst that I should ask of another that which I possess evermore in myself. In me is victory over the grave, in me is life eternal: by faith in me that becomes yours which makes death not to be death, but only the transition to a higher life."

Such, I cannot doubt, is the general meaning and scope of these glorious words, which yet claim to be considered somewhat more nearly and in detail. When we ask ourselves what Christ means by the title "*The Resurrection,*" which he attributes to himself, we perceive that in one aspect it is something more, in another something less, than that other title of "*The Life,*" which he claims. It is more, for it is life in conflict with and overcoming death; it is life being the death of death, meeting it in its highest manifestation, of physical dissolution and decay, and vanquishing it there. It is less, for so long as that title belongs to him, it implies something still undone, a mortality not yet wholly swallowed up in life, a last enemy not yet wholly destroyed, and put under his feet. (1 Cor.

\* This is the great thought of WORDSWORTH'S *Luodamia*. She who gives her name to that sublime poem, does not lift herself, she has none to lift her, into those higher regions in which the return of the beloved would be a blessing and a boon; and thus it proves to her a joyless, disappointing gift, presently again to be snatched away.



xv. 25, 26.) As he is “*the Resurrection*” of the dead, so is he “*the Life*” of the living—absolute life, having life in himself, for so it has been given him of the Father, (John v. 26,) the one fountain of life,\* so that all who receive not life from him pass into the state of death, first the death of the spirit, and then, as the completion of their death, the death also of the body.

The words following, “*He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die,*” are not obscure as far as the gathering the sum total of their meaning : yet so to interpret them, as to prevent the two clauses of the sentence from seeming to contain a repetition, and to find progress in them, is not easy. If we compare this passage with John vi. 32—59, and observe the repeated stress which is there laid on the raising up at the last day, as the great quickening work of the Son of God, (ver. 39, 40, 44, 54,) we shall not hesitate to make the declaration “*yet shall he live,*” in the first clause here, to be equivalent to the words, “*I will raise him up at the last day,*” there, and this whole first clause will then be the unfolding of the words, “*I am the Resurrection ;*” as such I will rescue every one that believeth on me from death and the grave. In like manner, the second clause answers to, and is the expansion of, the more general declaration, “*I am the Life*”—that is, “*Whosoever liveth, every one that draweth the breath of life and believeth upon me, shall know the power of an everlasting life, shall never truly die.*” Here, as so often in our Lord’s words, the temporal death is taken no account of, but quite overlooked, and the believer in him is contemplated as already lifted above death, and made partaker of everlasting life. (John vi. 47.)

Having claimed all this for himself, he demands of Martha whether she can receive it : “*Believest thou this,—that it is I who am this Lord of life and of death ? Does thy faith in the divine verities of the resurrection and eternal life after death centre in me ?*” Her answer, “*Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world,*” is perhaps more direct than at first sight it appears. For one of the offices of Christ the Messiah was, according to the Jewish expectations, to raise the dead ; and thus, confessing him to be the Christ, she implicitly confessed him also to be the quickener of the dead. Or she may mean,—“*I believe all glorious things concerning thee ; there is nought which I do not believe concerning thee, since I believe thee to be him in whom every glorious gift for the world is cen-*

\* Ο ζῶν (Rev. i. 8) ; ὁ ζωοποιῶν (Rom. iv. 17) ; ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν (Col. iii. 4) ; πηγὴ ζωῆς (Ps. xxxv. 9).

ted,"—speaking like one whose faith, as that of most persons at all times must be, was implicit rather than explicit: she did not know all which that name involved, but all which it did involve she was ready to believe.

She says no more; for now she will make her sister partaker of the joyful tidings that he, the long-desired, is come at last. Some good thing too, it may be, she expects from his high and mysterious words, though she knows not precisely what: a ray of comfort has found its way into her heart, and she would fain make her sister a sharer in this. Yet she told her tidings "*secretly*;" fearing, it may be, that some of their visitors from Jerusalem might be of unfriendly disposition towards the Lord; nor was her suspicion unfounded, as the event showed. (ver. 46.) She says to Mary apart, "*The Master is come, and calleth for thee.*" This, that he had asked for Mary, we had not learned from the previous account. At once she rises, and they that are round about her take it for granted that she is hastening in a paroxysm of her grief to the tomb, that she may weep there;—as it was the custom of Jewish women often to visit the graves of their kindred,\* and this especially during the first days of their mourning;—and they follow; for thus it was ordained of God that this miracle should have many witnesses. Mary falls at the feet of the Lord Jesus, greeting him exactly in the same words as her sister, "*Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*" The words thus repeating themselves a second time from her lips, give us a glimpse of all that had passed in that mournful house, since the beloved was laid in earth—how often during that four days' interval the sisters had said one to the other, how different the issues might have been, if the divine friend had been with them. This had been the one thought in the hearts, the one word upon the lips, of either, and therefore was so naturally the first spoken by each, and that altogether independently of the other. This is indeed one of the finer traits of the narrative.

At the spectacle of all this grief, the sisters weeping, and even the more indifferent visitors from Jerusalem weeping likewise, the Lord also "*groaned in spirit and was troubled.*"† The word which we trans-

\* ROSENMUELLER'S, *Alte und Neue Morgenland*, v. 4, p. 281. GEIER, *De Luctu Hebræorum*, c. 7, § 26.

† An emphasis has sometimes been laid on the ἐταράξεν ἑαυτὸν, turbavit seipsum. Thus by Augustine (*In Ev. Joh.*, Tract. 49): Quis enim eum posset nisi se ipse turbare? (Cf. *De Civ. Dei*, l. 14, c. 9, § 3.) And by Bengel: Affectus Jesu non fuere passiones, sed voluntariæ commotiones, quas planè in suâ potestate habebat; et hæc turbatio fuit plena ordinis et rationis summæ. It would then express something of the μετριοπάθεια of the Schools, as opposed on the one side to frantic outbreaks of grief, on

late "groaned,"\* does indeed far more express the feelings of indignation and displeasure than of grief, which, save as a measure of that is contained in all displeasure, it means not at all. But at what and with whom Jesus was thus indignant, has been very differently explained. The notion of some of the Greek expositors,† that he was indignant with himself at these risings of pity, these human tears,—that the word expresses the inward struggle to repress, as something weak and unworthy, these rising utterances of grief, is not to be accepted for an instant. Christianity knows of no such dead Stoicism; it knows of a regulating, but of no such repressing, of the natural affections; on the contrary, it bids us to weep with them that weep; and, in the beautiful words of Leighton, that we "seek not altogether to dry the stream of sorrow, but to bound it, and keep it within its banks." Some, as Theodore of Mopsuestia and Lampe, suppose that he was indignant in spirit at the hostile dispositions which he already traced and detected among the Jews that were present, the unbelief on their part with which he foresaw that great work of his would be received. Others,

the other to the ἀπάθεια of the Stoics. Yet while this is most true, it does not lie in this active ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτὸν, which is accidental: since elsewhere, on similar occasions, we have the passive ἐταράχθη τῷ πνεύματι. (John xiii. 21.) Cf. xii. 27, with which this is in fact identical.

\* Ἐμβριμάομαι (from βρίμη, Βριμῶ a name of Persephone or Hecate, and signifying The Angered, cognate with fremo, βριῖθος, φριμάω,) does not mean to be moved with any strong passion, as grief, or fear, but always implies something of anger and indignation. See Passow, s. v., who knows no other signification; and in like manner all the Greek interpreters upon this passage, however they might differ concerning the cause of the indignation, yet found indignation here expressed. So Luther: Er ergrimmete im Geiste. Storr then has right when he says (*Opusc. Acad.*, v. 3, p. 254): Quem vulgò sumunt *tristitiæ* significatum, is planè incertus esse videtur, cum nullo, quod sciamus, exemplo confirmari possit, Græcisque patribus tam valde ignotus fuerit, ut materiam ad succensendum, quamvis non repertam in Mariæ et comitum ejus ploratu, quærent certè in humanæ naturæ (τῆς σαρκός) Jesu propensione ad tristitiam, quam Jesus . . . increpaverit. (See SUICER'S *Thess.*, s. v.) The other passages in the New Testament where this word is used bear out this meaning. Twice it is used of our Lord *commanding, under the threat of his earnest displeasure*, those whom he had healed to keep silence, (Matt. ix. 30; Mark i. 43,) and one of those who were indignant at what Mary had done in the matter of the ointment (καὶ ἐμβριμῶντο αὐτῇ, Mark xiv. 5). It is nothing but the difficulty of finding a satisfactory object for the indignation of the Lord, which has caused so many modern commentators to desert this explanation, and make the word simply and merely an expression of grief and anguish of spirit. Lampe and Kuinoel defend the right explanation; and Lange (*Theol. Stud. und Krit.*, 1836, p. 714, seq.) has many beautiful remarks in an essay wherein he seeks to unite both meanings.

† See SUICER'S *Thess.*, s. v. ἐμβριμάομαι.

that his indignation was excited by the unbelief of Martha and Mary and the others, which they manifested in their weeping, whereby they showed clearly that they did not believe that he would raise their dead. But he himself wept presently, and there was nothing in these their natural tears to have roused a feeling of the kind.

Much better is it to take this as the indignation which the Lord of life felt at all which sin had wrought: he beheld death in all its fearfulness, as the wages of sin; and all the world's woes, of which this was but a little sample, rose up before his eye,—all the mourners and all the graves were present to him. For that he was about to wipe away the tears of those present, did not truly alter the case. Lazarus did but rise again, to taste a second time the bitterness of death: these mourners he might comfort, but only for a little while; these tears he might stanch, only again hereafter to flow; and how many had flowed and must flow with no such Comforter to wipe them, even for a season, away! Contemplating all this, a mighty indignation at the author of all this woe possessed his heart. And now he will delay no longer, but will do battle with him, and show, in a present, though as yet an incomplete, triumph over him, some preludes of his future victory.\* With this feeling he demands, “*Where have ye laid him? And they said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept:*”† himself borne along with, and not seeking to resist, this great tide of sorrow.

\* Apollinarius: Ὡσαύτως ἰστορεῖται τοὺς πολεμίους ἰδὼν, ἑαυτὸν παρῴζειε κατὰ τῶν ἀντιπάλων.

† We may compare, for purposes of contrast, the words of Artemis in that majestic concluding scene in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, where, in the midst of his misery, Hippolytus asks,

Ὁρᾷς με, ἔσπρον', ὡς ἔχω, τὸν ἄθλιον;

and she answers,

Ὁρῶ, κατ' ἄσπον δ' οὐ θέμις βαλεῖν ἔσπον.

Full as is that scene of soothing and elevating power, and even of a divine sympathy, yet a God of tears was a higher conception than the heathen world could reach to. After indeed the Son of God had come, and in that strange and inexplicable way had begun to modify the whole feeling of the heathen world, long before men had even heard of his name, the Roman poet could sing in words exquisitely beautiful themselves, and belonging to a passage among the noblest which antiquity supplies:

. . . mollissima corda  
Humano generi dare se natura fatetur,  
Quæ lacrymas dedit: hæc nostri pars optima sensus.

Juv., Sat. 15.

On the sinlessness of these natural affections, or rather on their necessity for a full humanity, see AUGUSTINE, *De Civ. Dei*, l. 14, c. 9, § 3.

Some of the Jews present, moved to good will by this lively sympathy of the Lord with the sorrows of those around him, exclaimed, "*Behold how he loved him!*" But\* others, perhaps invidiously, "*Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?*" He weeps over this calamity now, but could he not have hindered it? He who could open the eyes of the blind, (they allude to the case which, through the judicial investigation that followed, had made so great a stir at Jerusalem, John ix.) could he not (by his prayer to God) have hindered that this man should have died? There was indeed in this accusation, as there is so often in similar ones, something contradictory: for their very assumption that he possessed such power and favor with God that he could have stayed the stroke of death, rested on the supposition of so high a goodness upon his part, as would have secured that his power should not have been grudgingly restrained in any case, where it would have been suitably exerted. It is characteristic of the exact truth of this narrative, (although it has been brought as an argument against it,) that they, dwellers in Jerusalem, should refer to this miracle which had lately occurred there, (John ix.) rather than to the previous raisings from the dead, which might at first sight appear more to the point. But those, occurring at an earlier period, and in the remote Galilee, would not have been present to them with at all the same liveliness as was this miracle, which had been brought out into especial prominence by the contradiction which it had roused, and the futile attempts which had been made to prove it an imposture. Yet a maker up of the narrative from later and insecure traditions would inevitably have fallen upon those miracles of a like kind, as arguments of the power of Jesus to have accomplished this.

Meanwhile they reach the place where the tomb was, though not without another access of that indignant horror, another of those mighty shudderings that shook the frame of the Lord of life,—so dreadful did death seem to him who, looking *through* all its natural causes, at which we often stop short, saw it purely as the seal and token of sin, so unnatural its usurpation over a race made for immortality. The tomb, as the whole course of the narrative shows, was without the town, (ver. 30,) and this according to the universal custom of the East, (Luke vii. 12,) which was not to place the dead among the living.† It was a cave.

\* *Tὰς ἑ.* We translate "*And some;*" rather, "*But some.*" In the Vulgate, *Quidam autem.*

† ROSENUELLER'S *Alte und Neue Morgenland*, v. 4, p. 281. In like manner the Greeks buried for the most part, and with only rare exceptions, without the walls of their cities. (BECKER'S *Charikles*, v. 2, p. 188.)

Such were commonly the family vaults of the Jews : sometimes natural, (Gen. xxiii. 9,) sometimes artificial, and hollowed out by man's labor from the rock, (Isai. xxii. 16 ; Matt. xxvii. 60,) in a garden, (John xix. 41,) or in some field, the possession of the family, (Gen. xxiii. 9, 17—20 ; xxxv. 18 ; 2 Kin. xxi. 18 ;) with recesses in the sides, wherein the bodies were laid, occasionally with chambers one beyond another. Sometimes the entrance to these tombs was on a level, sometimes there was a descent to them by steps ; this last seems most probable on the present occasion, from the stone being said to lie *on* the tomb. The purpose of this stone was mainly to prevent the entrance of beasts of prey, and especially the numerous jackals, which else might have found their way into these receptacles of the dead, and torn the bodies. It was naturally of size and weight enough not easily to be moved away. (Mark xvi. 3.) The tomb of our blessed Lord himself, with its "door," seems rather to have had a horizontal entrance.\*

Among other slighter indications which we have that Mary and Martha were not at all among the poorest of their people, this is one, that they should possess such a family vault as this. The poor had not, and it lay not within their power to purchase in fee, portions of land to set apart for these purposes of family interment. The possession of such was a privilege of the wealthier orders ; only such as were thus laid in the sepulchres of their fathers.† We have another indication of this in the large concourse of mourners, and those of the higher ranks,‡ which assembled from Jerusalem to console the sisters in their bereavement ; for even in grief that word is too often true, that "wealth maketh many friends ; but the poor is separated from his neighbor." (Prov. xix. 4.) So, too, in the pound of ointment of spikenard, "*very costly*," with which Mary anointed the feet of the Saviour ; (John xii. 3 ;) and the language of the original at ver. 19, however it may mean Martha and Mary, and not those around them,§ yet means them *as the centre of an assemblage*. This was the general view of the early

\* See WINER'S *Real Wörterbuch*, s. v. Gräber.

† Becker (*Charikles*, v. 2, p. 190,) observes the same of the *μνήματα* among the Greeks. For the poorer and more numerous classes there were common burial-places, as with the Romans also. (See his *Gallus*, v. 2, p. 293 ; and the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt.*, s. v. Funus, p. 436.)

‡ St. John always uses *οἱ ἡγεῖται* (ver. 19), as a designation for *the chief* among the Jews.

§ *Τῆς περὶ Μάρθῃν καὶ Μαρίας*. Lampe: Nec facilè occurret phrasis nisi de personis illustribus, qui amicorum aut ministrorum grege cincti erant. Colligi ergo ex ea quoque hic potest quod Martha et Maria lautioris fortunæ fuerint.

Church concerning their rank in life. Chrysostom assumes the sisters to have been high-born.\* Yet though this was most probably the case, it is a mistaken emphasis which some lay upon "*the town of Mary and her sister Martha,*" (ver. 1,) when they conclude from thence that Bethany belonged to them. The Levitical law rendered, and was intended to render, any such concentration of landed property in the hands of only one or two persons impossible. As regards the phrase itself, by as good right Bethsaida might be said to have belonged to Andrew and Peter, for the language is exactly similar. (John i. 45.)

What is it that causes St. John to designate Martha (ver. 9) as "*the sister of him that was dead,*" when this is plain from the whole preceding narrative? Probably to explain her remonstrance at the taking away of the stone. She, as a sister of the dead, would naturally be more shocked than another at the thought of the exposure of that countenance, upon which corruption had already set its seal;—would most shudderingly contemplate that beloved form made a spectacle to strangers, now when it was become an abhorring even to them that had loved it best. Yet the words of her remonstrance are scarcely, as by so many they are interpreted, an experience which she now makes, but rather a conclusion which she draws from the length of time during which the body had already lain in the grave. With the rapid decomposition that goes forward in a hot country, necessitating as it does an almost immediate burial, the four days might well have brought this about, which she fears. At the same time, it gives the miracle almost a *monstrous* character to suppose it was actually the re-animating of a body which had already undergone the process of corruption. Rather he who sees the end from the beginning, and who had intended that Lazarus should live again, had watched over that body in his providence, that it should not hasten to corruption. If the poet could imagine a divine power guarding from all defeature and wrong the body which was thus preserved only for an honorable burial; † by how much more may we assume a like preservation for that body which, not in the world of fiction, but of reality, was to become again so soon the tabernacle for the soul of one of Christ's servants. Neither is there any thing in Martha's words to render any other view necessary; no conclusion of an opposite kind can be drawn from them; for they are plainly spoken before the stone is moved away from the opening of the tomb.‡

\* Εὐγενεστέροιαι.

† *Iliad*, xxiv. 18—21.

‡ It is singular how generally the words ἡδὴ ἀΐεται have been taken in proof of that, whereof they are only a conjecture, and as I am persuaded, an erroneous one. Indeed

Yet this much is certain from the words, that she had already let go the faith which at one moment she had conceived, that even yet her brother might live again. Nor is this strange, for such are ever the alternating ebbs and flows of faith. All that she could see in the command to remove the stone, was probably a desire on the Lord's part to look once more on the countenance of him whom he loved; and from this she would turn him, by urging how death and corruption would have already set their seal upon that: so it must needs be, "*for he hath been dead four days.*"

The Lord checks and rebukes her unbelief: "*Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?*" When had he said this, and to what former conversation does he allude? No doubt to that which he held with her when first they met. It is true that these very words do not occur there, but that conversation was on the power of faith, as the means to make our own the fulness of the powers that dwelt in Christ. There is no need, therefore, to suppose that he alludes to something in that prior discourse, unrecorded by the Evangelist. And now Martha acquiesces: she does believe, and no longer opposes the obstacle of her unbelief to what the Lord would do. And now, when they who are the nearest of kin are thus consenting, the stone is removed; and on this follows the thanksgiving prayer of the Lord; "*And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.*" Yet in any thanksgiving to God, and thanksgiving on account of being heard, there lay the possibility of a misinterpretation on the part of his disciples, and of the Church afterwards, when these words were handed down to it,—as though it would have been possible for the Father not to have heard him,—as though he had first obtained this power to call Lazarus from his grave, after supplication—had, like Elisha, by dint of prayer, painfully won back the life which had departed; whereas the power was most truly his own, not indeed in disconnection from the Father, for what he saw the Father do, that only he did: but in this, his oneness with the Father, there lay the uninter-

the following *καταράτος γὰρ ἔστι* seems decisive that it is a conjecture of Martha's, drawn only from the natural order of things, that corruption had begun. Yet Augustine (*In Ev. Joh., Tract.* 49): Resuscitavit putentem. Tertullian (*De Resur. Carn.*, c. 53.) speaks of the *soul* of Lazarus, quam nemo jam fertere senserat. Hilary (*De Trin.*, l. 6, § 33): Fœtens Lazarus. Ambrose says of the bystanders (*De Fide Resurr.*, l. 2, c. 80): Fœtorem sentiunt. Bernard (*In Assum.*, *Serm.* 4): Fœtere jam cœperat. Sedulius: Corruptum tabo exhalabat odorem; and a most disagreeable description in Prudentius (*Apotheosis*, 759—766); Chrysostom (*Hom.* 52 *in Joh.*); and Calvin: Alios Christus suscitavit, sed nunc in putrido cadavere potentiam suam exerit; and many more.



rupted power of doing these mighty acts.\* Therefore does he explain, not any more in that loud voice which should be heard by the whole surrounding multitude, but yet so that his disciples might hear him, what this "*Father, I thank thee*" means, and why it was spoken. "*I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.*" For them it was wholesome: they should thus understand that he claimed his power from above, and not from beneath; that there was no magic, no necromancy here. The thanks to God were an acknowledgment that the power was *from* God.

Chrysostom supposes that when this thanksgiving prayer was uttered, Lazarus was already re-animated, and, being re-animated, is now bidden to issue from the tomb. But rather, this cry "*with a loud voice,*"—this "*Lazarus, come forth,*" is itself the quickening word, at which life returns to the dead.† For it is ever to the *voice* of the Son of God that the power of quickening the dead and calling them from their graves is attributed. Thus, John v. 28, 29, "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." So, 1 Thes. iv. 16, it is the Lord's descending "*with a shout,*" which is followed by the resurrection of the dead in Christ. Nor, probably, is "the last trump" of 1 Cor. xv. 52, any thing else but this voice of God which shall sound through all the kingdom of death. Many in their zeal for multiplying miracles, make it a new miracle, a wonder in a wonder,‡ as St. Basil calls it, that Lazarus was able to obey the summons, while yet he was "*bound hand and foot with grave clothes.*"§ But if so, to what end the further word, "*Loose him, and let him go?*"|| Probably

\* Chrysostom (*Hom. 64 in Joh.*) enters at large upon this point. Maldonatus observes: *Nihil enim aliud his verbis quàm essentia voluntatisque unitatem significari.* Cf. AMBROSE, *De Fide*, l. 3, c. 4.

† As Hilary (*De Trin.*, l. 6, § 33,) expresses it: *Nullo intervallo vocis et vitæ.* Cyril, with reference to the simple grandeur of this summons, calls it *θεοπρεπὴς καὶ βασιλικὸν κέλευσμα.*

‡ *α ἐν θαύματι.* Cf. Ambrose, *De Fid. Resurr.*, l. 2, c. 78. And so Augustine, (*Enarr. in Ps. cì. 21*): *Processit ille vincetus: non ergo pedibus propriis, sed virtute producentis.*

§ *Κεῖράι = ὀθόνια* (John xix. 40.) Tertullian: *Vincula linea.*

|| Of Lazarus himself we have but one further notice, (John xii. 2.) but that, like the command to give meat to the revived maiden, (Mark v. 43,) like the Lord's own participation of food after the resurrection, (Luke xxiv. 42; John xxi. 13,) a witness against any thing merely *phantastic* in his rising again. He is generally assumed to have been much younger than his sisters; one tradition mentioned by Epiphanius, makes him thirty years old at this time, and to have survived for thirty years more. The traditions of his later life, as that he became Bishop of Marseilles, rest upon no

he was loosely involved in these grave clothes, which hindering all free action, yet did not hinder motion altogether; or, it may be, that, in accordance with the Egyptian fashion, every limb was wrapped round with these stripes by itself: in the mummies each separate finger has sometimes its own wrapping.

St. John here breaks off the narrative of the miracle itself, leaving us to imagine their joy, who thus beyond all expectation received back their dead from the grave; a joy, which was well nigh theirs alone, among all the mourners of all times,

“Who to the verge have followed that they love,  
And on the insuperable threshold stand,  
With cherished names its speechless calm reprove,  
And stretch in the abyss their ungrasped hand.”

He leaves this, and passes on to show us the historic significance of this miracle in the development of the Lord's earthly history, the permitted link which it formed in the chain of those events, which were to end, according to the determined decree and counsel of God, in the atoning death of the Son of God upon the cross.

What the purpose was of these Jews that “*went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done,*” has been diversely conceived. By some, as by Origen, it has been supposed that they went with a good intention, thinking to tell them that which even they could no longer resist, which would make them also acknowledge that this was the Christ. Yet the place which this intimation occupies in the narrative seems decisively to contradict this meaning. Many, observes St. John, believed on him, *but* some, not of those that believed, but of the Jews, went and told the Pharisees. What else can this mean, save that these were persons who did not believe; who on one or another plea refused to be convinced by this miracle, (Luke xvi. 31.) and went to professed enemies of the Lord to show them what had been done, to irritate them yet more against the doer,\* to warn them also of the instant need of more earnestly counter-working him who had done,

good authority: yet there is one circumstance of these traditions worthy of record, although not for its historic worth,—that the first question he asked the Lord after he was come back from the grave, was whether he should have to die again, and learning that it must needs be so, that he never smiled any more. Lazarus, as a *revenant*, is often used by the religious romance-writers of the middle ages as a vehicle for their conceptions of the lower world. He is made to relate what he has seen and known, just as the Pamphylian that revived, is used by Plato in the *Republic* for the same purposes. WRIGHT'S *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 167—169.)

\* Euthymius: Οὐχ ὡς θανάτουτες, ἀλλὰ διαβαλλομετες ὡς γοητα.

or seemed to do, so great a sign? and it is observable that St. John joins immediately with their report to the Pharisees the increased activity in the hostile machinations of these against the Lord.

And they are indeed now seriously alarmed; they anticipate the effects, which this greatest miracle that Christ did would have upon the people, which we know historically that it actually had; (John xii. 10, 11, 17—19;) and they gather in council together against the Lord and against his Anointed. They stop not to inquire whether the man, "*this man*," as they contemptuously call him, who, even according to their own confession, is doing many miracles, may not be doing them in the power of God, whether he may not be indeed the promised King of Israel. The question of the truth or falsehood of his claims seems never to enter into their minds, but only how the acknowledgment of these claims will bear on the worldly fortunes of their order, and this they contemplate under a somewhat novel aspect: "*If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.*"

For at first sight it seems difficult to understand how they necessarily connected together the recognition of Jesus for the Christ, and the collision with the Roman power. It was probably in this way. "The people will acknowledge him for the Messiah; he will set himself at their head, or they by compulsion will place him there, making him their king; (John vi. 15;) then will follow the vain attempt to throw off the foreign yoke, to be crushed presently by the superior power of the Roman legions; and then these will not distinguish the innocent from the guilty, but will make a general sweep, taking away from us wholly whatsoever survives of our power and independence, our place\* and our nation." Or without presuming an actual insurrection, they may have supposed that the mere fact of the acknowledging a Messiah would awaken the suspicions of the Romans, would by them be accounted as an act of rebellion, to be visited with these extremest penalties.† We see how on a later occasion the Roman governor instantly

\* Τὸν τόπον. Does this signify their city or their temple? A comparison with 2 Macc. v. 19 makes one certainly incline to the latter view. (Cf. Acts vi. 13, 14; xxi. 28.) The temple, round which all their hopes gathered, would naturally be uppermost in the minds of these members of the Sanhedrim. We nowhere find the same exaggerated importance attributed to the city as to it. Yet there are many who make τὸν τόπον = τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν. So Chrysostom, who in quoting the passage, substitutes, apparently unconsciously, πόλιν for τόπον. So likewise Theophylact, Olshausen.

† Corn. à Lapide: Si omnes credant Jesum esse Messiam, regem Judæorum, irritabuntur contra nos Romani Judææ domini, quod nobis novum regem et Messiam, putâ Jesum, creaverimus, ac à Cæsare Tiberio ad eum defecerimus; quare armati

comes to this point ; his first question is, " Art thou the King of the Jews ?" (John xviii. 33.) Augustine understands it somewhat differently,—that they were already meditating, as no doubt they were, the great revolt of a later time, and felt how all the nerves of it would be cut by the spread of the doctrines of this Prince of peace : for where should they find instruments for their purpose ? All resistance to the Roman power would become impossible ; and whensoever these chose, they would come and rob them of all which remained of their national existence.\* He is, however, I believe, single in maintaining this view, and the other is far the more natural. The question will still remain, whether they who said this, did truly feel the dread which they professed, or whether they only pretended to fear these consequences from the suffering Christ's ministry to remain uninterrupted, on account of a party in the Sanhedrim, for such there was, more or less well affected to Jesus, (see John ix. 16,) and who could only thus, by this plea of the consequences to them and to the whole nation, be won over to the extreme measures now meditated against him. Chrysostom, and most of the Greek expositors, suppose they did but feign to fear, yet I cannot but think that they were sincere in their alarm.

Probably many half measures had been proposed by one member and another of the Sanhedrim for arresting the growing inclination of the people to recognize Jesus as the Christ, and had been debated backward and forward, such as hindering them from hearing him, proclaiming anew, as had been done before, that any should be excommunicated who should confess him to be Christ. (John ix. 22.) But these measures had already been proved to be insufficient ; and in that "*Ye know nothing at all*" of Caiaphas, we hear the voice of the bold bad man, silencing, with ill-suppressed contempt, his weak and vacillating colleagues, who could see the common danger which threatened them, and yet shrunk, though from no righteous principle, from applying the effectual remedy. This man, who threatens to imperil the whole nation, and, whether willingly or not, to compromise it with the Roman power, must be taken out of the way : "*It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.*" Caiaphas, who dares thus to come to the point, and to speak the muttered thought of many in that assembly, was a Sadducee, (Acts v. 17.) and held the office of the high priesthood for ten successive years, which makes some-

venient et vastabunt et perdent Hierosolyman et Judæam, cum totâ Judæorum gente et republicâ.

\* *In Ev. Joh., Tract. 49:* Hoc autem timuerunt, ne si omnes in Christum crederent, nemo remaneret, qui adversus Romanos civitatem Dei templumque defenderet.

thing of a difficulty here ; for St. John's description of him as "*being the high priest that same year,*" might appear to imply that he esteemed the high priesthood as a yearly office and elective, whereas it was in truth for life and hereditary.\*

Now, though it is quite true, that, through the tyranny of the Romans, the high priesthood was as vilely prostituted as, under very similar circumstances, the patriarch's throne at Constantinople is now by the Turks, and shifted so rapidly from one to another, as sometimes to remain with one occupier even for less than this time, yet according to its idea it was for the life of the holder, and, in the present case, it was held by this one man if not for life, yet at least much more than a single year. The expression has sometimes been explained as if St. John would say that Caiaphas was high priest for that year, that ever-memorable year "when vision and prophecy should be sealed,"† and in which the Son of God should die upon the cross. But it seems easier to suppose that all which St. John meant to express was, that Caiaphas was high priest *then* ; whether he was also such before or after was nothing to his present purpose. He desires to bring out that he was high priest at the time when these words were uttered, because this gave a weight and significance to the words which else they would not have possessed ; and what significance this was, and why his words should have had it, he explains in what follows.

"*This spake he not of himself ; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation.*" It is clear that the Evangelist sees here an inner connection between the words spoken and the office which the speaker filled, and herein lies the real knot of the passage, which has to be untied : for that a bad man should have uttered words which were so overruled by God as to become prophetic, would be no difficulty. God, the same who used a Balaam to declare how there should come a Star out of Jacob and a Sceptre out of Israel, (Num. xxiv. 17,) might have used Caiaphas to foreannounce other truths of his kingdom.‡ Nor is there any difficulty in such *unconscious* prophecies as this evidently is.§ How many prophecies of the like kind,

\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh , Tract. 49*.) notes the difficulty, though he has a singular accumulation of mistakes in his explanation. Among others, that Zacharias, the father of the Baptist, was *high* priest ; a mistake continually re-appearing in the middle ages. It grew out of an inaccurate understanding of Luke i. 9.

† Lightfoot, *Sermon on Judg xx. 27.* (Pitman's edit , v. 6, p. 280.)

‡ Augustine adducing this prophecy, exclaims (*Serm. 315, c. 1*): *Magna vis est veritatis. Oderunt veritatem homines, et veritatem prophetant nescientes. Non agunt, sed agitur de illis.*

§ It exactly answers as such to the *omina* of Roman superstition, in which words

—most of them, it is true, rather in act than in word, meet us in the whole history of the crucifixion! What was the title over our blessed Lord, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews,” but another such a scornful and contemptuous, yet most veritable, prophecy? Or what again the robe and the homage, the sceptre and the crown? And in the typical rehearsals of the great and final catastrophe in the drama of God’s providence, how many Nimrods and Pharaohs, antichrists that do not quite come to the birth, have prophetic parts allotted to them, which they play out, unknowing what they do; for such is the divine irony; so, in a very deep sense of the words,

Ludit in humanis divina potentia rebus.\*

But the perplexing circumstance is the attributing to Caiaphas, as *high priest*, these prophetic words, for prophetic the Evangelist pronounces them plainly to be, and all attempts to get rid of this as his intention, and to destroy the antithesis between “*speaking of himself*” and “*prophesying*,” are idle.† There is no need, however, to suppose, (and this greatly lightens the difficulty,) that he meant to affirm this to have been a power which always went along with the high priesthood; that the high priest, as such, *must* prophesy; but only that God, the extorter of those unwilling, or even unconscious, prophecies from wicked men, ordained this further, that he who was the head of the theocratic

spoken by one person in a lower meaning taken up by another in a higher, and by him claimed to be prophetic of that. Cicero (*De Divin.*, l. 1, c. 46) gives examples; these, too, resting on the faith that men’s words are ruled by a higher power than their own.

\* We have an example of this, in this very name Caiaphas, which is only another form of Cephias, being derived from the same Hebrew word. He was meant to be “the Rock;” here, too, as in names like Stephen’s (*στέφανος*, the first winner of the martyr’s *corona*), the *nomen et omen* was to have held good. And such, had he been true to his position, had the Jewish economy passed easily and without a struggle into that for which it was the preparation, he would naturally have been; the first in the one would have been first in the other. But as it was, he bore this name but in mockery; he was the rock indeed, but the rock on which, not the Church of Christ, but the synagogue of Satan, was built.

† For examples of these, see WOLF’S *Cura* (in loc.) It has likewise been proposed to put a stop after *προεφήτευσεν*, and to find here a device on the part of Caiaphas for silencing opposition, and for making his own opinion to early the day: This he spake, not as though he was giving his own opinion, (*οὐκ ἄβ’ ἑαυτοῦ*.) but taking advantage of the old faith, that on great emergent occasions the high priest would be endowed with oracular power, he professed now to be uttering that which was directly given him by the inspiration of God. And then *ὁτε ἔμελλεν, κ. τ. λ.* are words of the Evangelist: He did this, and succeeded in so getting the decree of death to be passed, for Jesus was about to die for the people.

people, for such, till another high priest had sanctified himself, and his moral character was nothing to the point, Caiaphas truly was,—that the man who according to the idea of the Levitical constitution was to utter lively oracles, wearing upon his breastplate, while the priesthood stood in its first perfection, the oracular stones, the Urim and the Thummim, which he might consult on all great affairs that concerned the well-being of the nation,—that this man, because he bore this office, should be the organ of this memorable prophecy concerning Christ and the meaning and end of his death in regard of that nation.\*

We are not to take these words which follow, “*and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad,*” as part of the meaning which is legitimately involved in the words of Caiaphas, but as St. John’s addition to his words, added to prevent a limitation of the benefits of the death of Christ which might seem to lie in them,—a misinterpretation which, now that the words had been made more than man’s words, it was worth while to exclude. Caiaphas indeed prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation, and, (St. John himself adds,) not for it only, but also for the gathering into one of *all* the children of God which were scattered abroad in the whole world. The best parallel to this verse is 1 John ii. 2, “He is a propitiation for our sins; not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”† Not the Law, as the Jews

\* Vitringa (*Obs. Sac.*, l. 6, c. 11): Visus est Caiaphas Joanni fatidicum et ominosum quid proferre. Et verè sententia ejus hujusmodi est, ut altiozem aliquem sensum condat . . . . Supponit igitur apostolus non fuisse alienum à Pontifice Hebræorum illo tempore προφητεύειν, oracula fundere, et nescium etiam mandata Numinis profari. A Pontifice, inquam, hoc solùm respectu Deo commendabili, quod Pontifex esset; cùm cæteroquin personæ ejus nulla essent merita, quæ facere poterant, ut Deus illius rationem haberet. Sed cùm Deus Pontifices constituisset in illà gente, publicos suæ Legis voluntatisque interpretes, etiamsi eos in universum propterea neutiquam emisisset omni errore judicii in re religionis; placuit illi Caiaphæ Pontificis potius quàm ullius alterius Assessoris linguam in dicendâ sententiâ ita moderari, ut, præter animi sui consilium, de necessitate et vero fine mortis Christi sapienter loqueretur, veramque ederet confessionem, ac si non tanquam Caiaphas sententiam pronunciasset. On the special illumination vouchsafed to the high priest as the bearer of the ephod, see BAHR’s *Symbolik des Mosaischen Cultus*, v. 2, p. 136.

† This almost imperceptible transition from the record of another’s words to his own commentary on them, is very much in St. John’s manner. Thus, ch. iii. from ver. 16 to ver. 21, is, most probably, not any more the Lord’s discourse to Nicodemus, for he nowhere calls *himself* “the only begotten Son of God,” but St. John’s addition to and interpretation of it: and the Baptist’s reply to the Jews (iii. 27,) hardly stretches to the end of the chapter; but from ver. 31 to the end are the narrator’s own. And not less is it his manner thus to guard against an erroneous interpretation: in Bengel’s words, Ubique occurrit Johannes interpretationi sinistræ. Cf. xxi. 23.

supposed, but the atoning death of Christ was that which should bind together all men into one fellowship: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." The law was rather a wall of separation; it was only that death which could knit together. We may compare Ephes. ii. 13—22, as the great commentary of St. Paul on these words of St. John.\* The term "*children of God*" is probably applied here by anticipation,—those that, through obeying his call when it reached them, should become hereafter his children. Exactly in the same way, and in a parallel passage, Christ says, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold," (John x. 16,) others that should be his sheep. There is perhaps a subordinate sense in which they might be termed the children of God already,—they were the nobler natures, although now run wild, among the heathen,—the "sons of peace" that should receive the message of peace; (Luke x. 6;) in a sense, "of the truth," even while they were sharing much of the falsehood round them. so "of the truth" that, when the King of truth came and lifted up his banner in the world, they gladly ranged themselves under it. (John xviii. 37; cf. Luke viii. 15; John iii. 19—21.)

It had now come to a solemn decree on the part of the Sanhedrim, that Jesus should be put to death, and from that day forth there were continual counsels among them how his death might be brought about: but he, whose hour was not yet come, withdrew himself awhile from their malice to the neighborhood of the desert country lying northward of Jerusalem, there to abide, till the approach of the Passover should bring him back to the city, to supply at length the true Paschal Lamb.

In the ancient Church there was ever found, besides the literal, an allegorical interpretation of this and the two other miracles of the like kind. As Christ raises those that are naturally dead, so also does he quicken them that are spiritually dead; and the history of this miracle, as it abounds the most in details, so was it the most fruitful field on which the allegorists exercised their skill. Here they found the whole process of the sinner's restoration from the death of sin to a perfect spiritual life shadowed forth; and these allegories are often rich in manifold adaptations of the history, as beautiful as they are ingenious, to that which it is made to set out.\* Nor was this all; for these three

\* It is notable that the word *ἔθνος* is here more than once used for the Jewish nation. In general this is the word used for the Gentiles, and "the people" are honored with the title of *λαός*, as at Luke ii. 32. Bengel thinks it not accidental; *Johannes non jam appellat *λαόν* populum, politâ expirante.*

† See, for instance, AUGUSTINE, *Quæst.* 83. qu. 65; BERNARD, *De Assum.*, *Serm.* 4.



raisings from the dead were often contemplated not apart, not as each portraying exactly the same truth, but in their connection with one another; as setting forth one and the same truth under different and successive aspects. It was observed how we have the record of three persons that were restored to life,—one, the daughter of Jairus, being raised from the bed; another, the son of the widow, from the bier; and lastly, Lazarus, from the grave. And it is even thus, men said, that Christ raises to newness of life sinners of all degrees; not only those who have just fallen away from truth and holiness, like the maiden who had just expired, and in whom, as with a taper just extinguished, it was by comparison easy to kindle a vital flame anew;—but he raises also them who, like the young man borne out to his burial, have been some little while dead in their trespasses. Nor has he even yet exhausted his power; for he quickens them also who, like Lazarus, have lain long festering in their sins, as in the corruption of the grave, who were not merely dead, but buried,—with the stone of evil customs and evil habits laid to the entrance of their tomb, and seeming to forbid all egress thence:\* even this he rolls away, and bids them to come forth, loosing the bands of their sins;† so that anon we see them sitting down with the Lord at his table, there where there is not the foul odor of the grave, but where the whole house is full of the sweet fragrance of the ointment of Christ.‡ (John xii. 1—3.)

\* Gregory the Great (*Moral.*, l. 22, c. 15): Veni foras; ut nimirum homo in peccato suo mortuus, et per molem malæ consuetudinis jam sepultus, quia intra conscientiam suam absconsus jacet per nequitiam, à semetipso foras exeat per confessionem. Mortuo enim, Veni foras, dicitur, ut ab excusatione atque occultatione peccati ad accusationem suam ore proprio exire provocetur. And he refers to 2 Sam. xii. 13. Thus, too, the Christian poet:—

Extra portam jam delatum,  
Jam fetentem, tumulatum,  
Vitta ligat, lapis urget;  
Sed si jubes, hic resurget.  
Jube, lapis revolvetur,  
Jube, vitta dirumpetur,  
Exiturus nescit moras,  
Postquam clamas; Exi foras.

† Sometimes Augustine makes the stone to be the Law. Thus *In Ev. Joh.*, *Tract.* 49: Quid est ergo, Lapidem removete? . . . Litera occidens, quasi lapis est premens. Removete, inquit, lapidem. Removete Legis pondus, Gratiam prædicate. And, “*Loose him and let him go,*” is sometimes referred to the release from Church censures. It was Christ's word which quickened the dead; yet afterwards he used men for the restoring entire freedom of action to him whom he had quickened. Thus AUGUSTINE, *Enarr. in Ps.* ci. 21; and *Serm.* 98, c. 6: Ille suscitavit mortuum, illi solverunt ligatum.

‡ We nowhere find the other raisings from the dead as affording subjects for early

Christian Art ; but this most frequently, and in all its stages. Sometimes it is Martha kneeling at the feet of Jesus ; sometimes the Lord is touching with his wonder-staff the head of Lazarus, who is placed upright, (which is a mistake, and a transfer of Egyptian customs to Judæa,) and rolled up as a mummy, (which was nearly correct,) in a niche of the grotto ; sometimes he is coming forth from thence at the word of the Lord. (MÜENTER, *Sinnbildern d. alt. Christ*, v. 2, p. 98.) From a sermon of Asterius we learn that it was a custom in his time, and Chrysostom tells us it was the same among the wealthy Byzantines, to have this and many other miracles of our Lord woven on their garments. “ Here mayest thou see,” says Asterius, “ the marriage in Galilee and the waterpots, the impotent man that carried his bed on his shoulders, the blind man that was healed with clay, the woman that had an issue of blood and touched the hem of his garment, the awakened Lazarus ; and with this they count themselves pious, and to wear garments well-pleasing to God.” How close on the edge of not unlike superstitions do we find ourselves at this day.

### XXX.

## THE OPENING THE EYES OF TWO BLIND MEN NEAR JERICHO.

MATT. XX. 29—34; MARK X. 46—52; LUKE XVIII. 35—43.

THIS is one of the events in the life of our Lord which has put the ingenuity of Scripture harmonists to the stretch. The apparent discrepancies which it is their task to reconcile are these. St. Matthew makes our Lord to have restored sight to *two* blind men, and this as he was going out of Jericho. St. Luke appears at first sight to contradict both these facts, for he makes the cure to have taken place at his coming nigh to the city, and the healed to have been but one; while St. Mark seems to stand between them, holding in part to one of his fellow Evangelists, in part to the other. He with St. Luke names but one whose eyes were opened, but consents with St. Matthew in placing the miracle, not at the entering into, but the going out from, Jericho, so that the narratives curiously cross and interlace one another. To escape all difficulties of this kind there is of course the ready expedient always at hand, that the sacred historians are recording different events, and that therefore there is nothing to reconcile, although oftentimes this is an escape from difficulties of one kind, which only really involves in far greater embarrassments of another. Thus, accepting this solution, we must believe that twice, or even thrice, in the immediate neighborhood of Jericho, our Lord was besought in almost the same words by blind beggars on the wayside for mercy;—that on every occasion there was a multitude accompanying him, who sought to silence the vociferations of the claimants, but did only cause them to cry the more;—that in each case Jesus stood still and demanded what they wanted;—that in each case they made the same reply in very nearly the same words;—and a great deal more. All this is so unna-

tural, so improbable, so unlike any thing of actual life, so unlike the infinite variety which the Gospel incidents present, that any solution seems preferable to this.

There are three apparently discordant accounts, none of them entirely agreeing with any other: but they can at once be reduced to two by that rule, which in all reconciliations of parallel histories must be held fast, namely, that the silence of one narrator is not to be assumed as the contradiction of the statement of another; thus St. Mark\* and St. Luke, making especial mention of one blind man, do not contradict St. Matthew, who mentions two. There remains only the difficulty that by one Evangelist the healing is placed at the Lord's entering into the city, by the others at his going out. This is not, I think, sufficient to justify a duplication of the fact.† Nor have I any doubt that Bengel, with his usual happy tact, has selected the right reconciliation of the difficulty;‡ namely, that one cried to him as he drew near to the city,§ but that he did not cure him then, but on the morrow at his going out of the city cured him together with the other, to whom in the meanwhile he had joined himself,—the Evangelist relating by prolepsis, as is so common with all historians, the whole of the event where he first intro-

\* Augustine, (*De Cons. Evang.*, l. 2, c. 65): Procul dubio itaque Bartimæus iste Timæi filius ex aliquâ magnâ felicitate dejectus, notissimæ et famosissimæ miseria fuit, quòd non solum cæcus, verùm etiam mendicus sedebat. Hinc est ergo quod ipsum solum voluit commemorare Marcus, ejus illuminatio tam clarâ famam huic miraculo comparavit, quàm erat illius nota calamitas. Cf. *Quæst. Evang.*, l. 2, c. 48.

† Some, indeed, equally in old times and in modern, have seen themselves bound in to such a conclusion:—thus Augustine (*De Cons. Evang.*, l. 2, c. 65), who expresses himself strongly on the matter; Lightfoot (*Harmony of the N. T.*, sect. 69); and, in our own time, Mr. Greswell. On the other hand, Theophylact, Chrysostom, Maldonatus, Grotius, have with more or less confidence maintained that we have here but one and the same event.

‡ Bengel: Marcus unum commemorat Bartimæum, insigniorem, (x. 46.) eundemque Lucas (xviii. 35) innuit, qui transponendæ historiæ occasionem exinde habuit, quod cæcorum alter, Jesu Hierichuntem intrante, in viâ notitiam divini hujus medici acquisivit. Salvator dum apud Zacchæum pranderet, vel pernoctaret potius, Bartimæo cæcorum alter, quem Matthæus adjungit, interim associatus est. I observe Maldonatus had already fallen upon the same.

§ The explanation of Grotius is, that *ἐν τῷ ἐγγίζειν* of Luke does not necessarily mean, and does not here mean, When he was drawing near to, but, When he was in the neighborhood of,—and that this nearness to the city might equally have been, and in this case was, the nearness of one who had just departed *from* the city, and not that of one who was now advancing *to* the city. But, to set aside whether the words *can* mean this, the narrative, which follows, of Zacchæus, (introduced with a *καὶ εἰσελθὼν*), is wholly against the supposition that St. Luke means to signify by those words that the Lord was now *leaving* Jericho.

duces it, rather than, by cutting it in two halves, preserve indeed a more painful accuracy, yet lose the total effect which the whole narrative related at a breath would possess.

The cry with which these blind men sought to attract the pity of Christ was on their part a recognition of his dignity as the Messiah; for this name, "*Son of David*," was the popular designation of the Messiah. There was therefore upon their part a double confession of faith, first that he could heal them, and secondly, not merely as a prophet from God, but as *the Prophet*, as the one who should come, according to the words of Isaiah, to give sight to the blind. In the case of the man blind from his birth, (John ix.) we have the same confessions, but following, and not preceding the cure, and with intervals between; so that first he acknowledges him as a prophet, (ver. 17,) and only later as the Messiah. (ver. 38.)

And here the explanation has been sometimes found of the rebukes which they met from the multitude, who would fain have had them to hold their peace. These, it has been said, desired to hinder their crying, because they grudged to hear given unto Jesus this title of honor, which they were not themselves prepared to accord him.\* This passage will then be very much a parallel to Luke xix. 39; only that there the Pharisees would have Christ himself to rebuke those that were glorifying him and giving him honor, while here the multitude take the rebuking into their own hands. Yet I hardly think the explanation good. It was quite in the spirit of the envious malignant Pharisees to be vexed with those Messianic salutations, "Blessed be the King, that cometh in the name of the Lord;" but these well-meaning multitudes, rude and for the most part spiritually undeveloped, as no doubt they were, were yet exempt from those spiritual malignities. We never trace aught of this kind in them, but rather in the main a sympathy with the Lord; it was not they who said that his miracles were wrought in the power of Beelzebub; but they glorified God because of them. And here, too, I cannot doubt but that it was out of an intention of honoring Christ, that they sought to silence what appeared to them these ill-timed and unmannerly clamors. It may be that he was teaching as he went, and they would not have him interrupted.

But their endeavors to suppress the crying of these blind men profited nothing: on the contrary, "*they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, thou Son of David.*" Many admirable homiletic applications of this portion of the history have been made. Here, it has been often

\* Hilary (*Comm. in Matth.*, in loc.): Denique eos turba objurgat, quia acerbè à cæcis audiunt quod negabant, Dominum esse David Filium.

said, is the history of many a soul: when a man is first in earnest about his salvation, and begins to cry that his eyes may be opened, that he may walk in his light who is the Light of men, when he begins to despise the world and to be careless about riches, he will find infinite hinderances, and these not from professed enemies of the Gospel of Christ, but from such as seem, like this multitude, to be with Jesus and on his side. Even they will try to stop his mouth, and to hinder an earnest crying to him.\* And then, with a stroke from the life, Augustine makes further application in the same direction of the words which follow in St. Mark, who, speaking as but of one that cried, says, "*And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee!*" For, he observes, this too repeats itself often in the spiritual history of men's lives. If a man will only despise these obstacles from a world which calls itself Christian, and overcome them; if despite of all he will go on, until Christ is evidently and plainly with him, then they who began by reprehending, will finish by applauding: they who at first said, He is mad, will end with saying, He is a saint.†

\* Augustine (*Serm.* 349, c. 5): Reprehensuri sunt nos, . . . quasi dilectores nostri, homines sæculares, amantes terram, sapientes pulverem, nihil de celo ducentes, auras liberas corde, nare carpentes: reprehensuri sunt nos procul dubio, atque dieturi, si viderint nos ista humana, ista terrena contemnere; Quid pateris? quid insanis? Turba illa est contradicens, ne cæcus clamet. Et aliquanti Christiani sunt, qui prohibent vivere Christianè, quia et illa turba cum Christo ambulabat, et vociferantem hominem ad Christum ac lucem desiderantem, ab ipsius Christi beneficio prohibebat. Sunt tales Christiani, sed vincamus illos, vivamus bene, et ipsa vita sit vox nostra ad Christum. And again, *Serm.* 88, c. 13, 14: Incipiat mundum contemnere, inopi sua distribuere, pro nihilo habere quæ homines amant, contemnat injurias, . . . si quis ei abstulerit sua, non repetat; si quid alieni abstulerit, reddat quadruplum. Cum ista facere coeperit, omnes sui cognati, affines, amici commoventur. Quid insanis? Nimius es: numquid alii non sunt Christiani? Ista stultitia est, ista dementia est. Et cætera talia turba clamat, ne cæci clament. . . Bonos Christianos, vere studiosos, volentes facere præcepta Dei, Christiani mali et tepidi prohibent. Turba ipsa que cum Domino est prohibet clamantes, id est, prohibet bene operantes, ne perseverando sanentur. Gregory the Great gives it another turn, saying (*Hom.* 2 in *Evang.*): Sæpe namque dum converti ad Dominum post perpetrata vitia volumus, dum contra hæc eadem exorare vitia quæ perpetravimus, conamur, occurrunt cordi phantasmata peccatorum quæ fecimus, mentis nostræ aciem reverberant, confundunt animum, et vocem nostræ deprecationis premunt. Quæ præstant ergo, merebant eum, ut taceret. . . . In se, ut suspicor, recognoscit unusquisque quod dicimus: quia dum ab hoc mundo animum ad Deum mutamus, dum ab orationis opus convertimur, ipsa quæ prius delectabiliter gessimus, importuna postea atque gravia in oratione nostrâ toleramus. Vix eorum cogitatio manu sancti desiderii ab oculis cordis abigitur; vix eorum phantasmata per penitentiam lamenta superantur.

† Augustine (*Serm.* 88, c. 17): Cum quisque Christianus coeperit bene vivere, fervere bonis operibus, mundumque contemnere, in ipsâ novitate operum suorum patitur

At this cry of theirs "*Jesus stood still,*" arrested, as ever, by the cry of need, "*and called them ;*" or, in the words of St. Mark, (x. 49,) who throughout tells but of the one, "*commanded him to be called. And he, casting away his garment,*" to the end that he might obey with the greater expedition, and that he might be hindered by nothing, "*rose and came to Jesus ;*"—in this ridding himself of all which would have been in his way, used often as an example for every soul which Jesus has called, that it should in like manner lay aside every weight and whatever would hinder it from coming speedily to him. (Matt. xiii. 44, 46 ; Phil. iii. 7.) The Lord's question, "*What wilt thou that I should do unto thee ?*" is, in part, an expression of his readiness to aid, a comment in act upon his own words, spoken but a little while before, "*The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister ;*" (Matt. xx. 28,) in part uttered for the calling out into yet livelier exercise the faith and expectation of the petitioner. (Matt. ix. 28.) The man, whose cry has been hitherto a vague general cry for mercy, now singles out the blessing which he craves, declares the channel in which he desires that this mercy may run,\* and makes answer, "*Lord, that I might receive my sight.*" Only St. Matthew mentions the touching of the eyes which were to be restored to vision, and only St. Luke the word of power, the "*Receive thy sight,*" by which the cure was effected. The man, who had hitherto been tied to one place, now used aright his restored eyesight ; for he used it to follow Jesus in the way, and this with the free outbreaks of a thankful heart, himself "*glorifying God,*" and being the occasion that others glorified his name as well. (Acts iii. 8—10.)

reprehensores et contradictores frigidos Christianos. Si autem perseveraverit, et eos superaverit perdurando, et non defecerit à bonis operibus ; iidem ipsi jam obsequuntur, qui antè prohibebant. Tandiu enim corripunt et perturbant et vetant, quamdiu sibi cedi posse præsumunt. Si autem victi fuerint perseverantiâ proficientium, convertunt se et dicere incipiunt, Magnus homo, sanctus homo, felix cui Deus concessit. Honorant, gratulantur, benedicunt, laudant ; quomodo illa turba quæ cum Domino erant. Ipsa prohibebat ne cæci clamarent ; sed postquam illi ita clamaverunt, ut mererentur audiri, et impetrare misericordiam Domini, ipsa turba rursum dicit, Vocat vos Jesus. Jam et hortatores fiunt, qui paulo ante corripiebant ut tacerent.

\* Gregory the Great, (*Hom. 2 in Evang.*) commenting on this request of theirs, bids us to make request for the same, and in like manner to *concentrate* our petitions on the greatest thing of all: Non falsas divitias, non terrena dona, non fugitivos honores à Domino, sed *lucem* quæramus: nec lucem quæ loco clauditur, quæ tempore finitur, quæ noctium interruptione variatur, quæ à nobis communiter cum pecoribus cernitur: sed lucem quæramus, quam videre cum solis Angelis possimus, quam nec initium inchoat, nec finis angustat.

## XXXI.

### THE WITHERING OF THE FRUITLESS FIG-TREE.

MATT. xxi. 17—22; MARK xi. 12—14, 20—24.

THIS miracle was wrought upon the Monday of the week of Passion. On the Sunday of Palms our blessed Lord had made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and in the evening,—since even now his hour, though close at hand, was not altogether come,—he retired from the snares and perils of the city to the safer Bethany, to the house probably of those sisters whom he had so lately enriched with a restored brother, and there passed the night. On the morning of Monday, as he was returning from Bethany to his ministry in the city very early, indeed before sunrise, the word against the fig-tree was spoken. That same evening he with his disciples went back to Bethany to lodge there, but probably at so late an hour that the darkness prevented these from marking the effects which had followed upon that word. It was not till the morning of Tuesday that “*they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots.*” Such is the exact order of the circumstances, in the telling of which St. Mark shows himself a more accurate observer of times than the first Evangelist;—not, indeed, that this gives him any superiority; our advantage is that we have both narrations:—St. Matthew’s, who was concerned for the inner idea, and hurried on to that, omitting circumstances which came between, that he might present the whole event at a single glance, in a single picture, without the historical perspective,—of which he at no time takes so much note, his gifts and his aim being different;—and also St. Mark’s, who was concerned likewise for the picturesque setting forth of the truth in its external details, as it was linked with times and with places, as it gradually unfolded itself before the eyes of men.



But while such differences as these are easily set at one, and they who enhance them into difficulties are the true Pharisees of history, straining at gnats and swallowing camels, there are other and undoubted difficulties in this narrative, and those not unworthy of consideration. And this first, that our Lord, knowing as by his divine power he must, that there were no figs upon that tree, should yet have gone to seek them there, should have made to his disciples as though he had expected to find them. It might be anxiously asked in what way this was consistent with the perfectness of sincerity and truth. Slight as would have been the deceit, yet, if it was such, it would trouble the clearness of our image of him, whom we conceive of as the absolute Lord of truth. It is again perplexing, that he should have treated the tree as a moral agent, punishing it as though unfruitfulness was any guilt upon its part. This would be in itself perplexing, but becomes infinitely more so by the notice which St. Mark inserts, and which indeed our acquaintance with the order of the natural year would, without this notice, have suggested, that it was not then the time of figs: so that at the time when they could not seasonably be expected, he sought, and was displeased at failing to find them. For, whatever the under-meaning might have been in treating the tree as a moral agent, and granting that to have been entirely justified, yet does it seem again entirely lost and obscured, when it was thus put out of the power of the tree to be otherwise than it was, namely, without fruit. For the symbol must needs be carried through: if by a figure we attribute guilt to the tree for not having fruit, we must be consistent, and show that it might have had such,—that there was no just and sufficient excuse why it should have been without this.

Upon the first point, that the Lord went to the tree, appearing to expect that he should find fruit upon it, and yet knowing that he should find none, deceiving thereby those who were with him, who no doubt believed that what he professed to look for, he expected to find, it is sufficient to observe that a similar charge might be made against all figurative teaching, whether by word or by deed: for in all such there is a worshipping of truth in the spirit and not in the letter; often a forsaking it in the letter, for the better honoring and establishing of it in the spirit. A parable is told *as true*, and though the facts are feigned, yet *is true*, because of the deeper truth which sustains the outward fabric of the story; it is true, because it is the shrine of truth, and because the truth which it enshrines looks through and through it. Even so a symbolic action is done *as real*, as meaning something; and yet, although not meaning the thing which it professes to mean, is no deception, since it means something infinitely higher and deeper, of which the

lower action is a type, and in which that lowest is lost and swallowed up; transfigured and transformed by the higher, whereof it is made the vehicle. What was it, for instance, here, if Christ meant not really to look for fruit on that tree, being aware that it had none? yet he did mean to show how it would fare with a man or with a nation, when God came looking from it for the fruits of righteousness, and found nothing but the abundant leaves of a boastful yet empty profession.\*

As regards the second objection, that he should have put forth his anger on a tree, the real objection lying at the root of this in many minds oftentimes is, that he should have put forth his anger at all; that God should ever show himself as a punishing God; that there should be any such thing as the wrath of the Lamb, as the giving account of advantages, as a dreadful day. But seeing that such things are, how needful that men should not forget it: yet they might have forgot it, as far as the teaching of the miracles went, but for this one—all the others being miracles of help and of healing. And even the severity of this, with what mercy was it tempered! He did not, like Moses and Elijah, make the assertion of God's holiness and his hatred of evil at the cost of many lives, but only at the cost of a single unfeeling tree. His miracles of mercy were unnumbered, and on men; his miracle of judgment was but one, and on a tree.†

\* Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.*, l. 2, c. 51): Non enim omne quod fingimus mendacium est: sed quando id fingimus, quod nihil significat, tunc est mendacium. Cùm autem fictio nostra refertur ad aliquam significationem, non est mendacium, sed aliqua figura veritatis. Alioquin omnia quæ à sapientibus et sanctis viris, vel etiam ab ipso Domino figuratè dicta sunt, mendacia deputabuntur, quia secundùm usitatum intellectum non subsistit veritas talibus dictis. . . . Sicut autem dicta, ita etiam facta finguntur sine mendacio ad aliquam rem significandam; unde est etiam illud Domini quod in fici arbore quæsit fructum eo tempore, quo illa poma nondum essent. Non enim dubium est illam inquisitionem non fuisse veram; quivis enim hominum sciret, si non divinitate, vel tempore, poma illam arborem non habere. Fictio igitur quæ ad aliquam veritatem refertur, figura est; quæ non refertur, mendacium est. Cf. *Serm.* 89, 4—6: Quærit intelligentem, non facit errantem.

† Hilary (*Comm. in Matth.*, in loc.): In eo quidem bonitatis Dominicæ argumentum reperimus. Nam ubi offerre voluit procuratæ à se salutis exemplum, virtutis suæ potestatem in hominis corporibus exercent: spem futurorum et animæ salutem curis præsentium ægritudinum commendans: . . . nunc verò, ubi in contumaces formam severitatis constituebat, futuri speciem damno arboris indicavit, ut infidelitatis periculum, sine detrimento eorum in quorum redemptionem venerat, doceretur. Thus, too. Grotius: Clementissimus Dominus, quum innumeris miraculis sua in nos æterna beneficia figurasset, severitatem judicii, quod infrugiferos homines manet, uno duntaxat signo, idque non in homine, sed in non sensurâ arbore, adumbravit; ut certi essemus bonorum operum sterilitatem gratiæ fecundantis ademptione puniri. Theophylact

But then, say some, it was unjust to deal thus with a tree at all, since that, being incapable of good or of evil, was as little a fit object of blame as of praise, of punishment as reward. But this very objection does, in truth, imply that it was *not* unjust, that the tree was a *thing*, which might therefore lawfully be used merely as a means for ends lying beyond itself. Man is the prince of creation, and all things else are to serve him, and then rightly fulfil their subordinate uses when they do serve him,—in their life or in their death,—yielding unto him fruit, or warning him in a figure what shall be the curse and penalty of unfruitfulness. Christ did not attribute moral responsibilities to the tree, when he smote it because of its unfruitfulness, but he did attribute to it a fitness for representing moral qualities.\* All our language concerning trees, a *good* tree, a *bad* tree, a tree which *ought* to bear, is exactly the same continual transfer to them of moral qualities, and a witness for the natural fitness of the Lord's language,—the language indeed of an act, rather than of words. By his word, however, (Luke xiii. 6—9, †) he had already in some sort prepared his disciples

brings out in the same way the *φιλανθρωπία* of this miracle; *ξηραίνει οὖν τὸ δένδρον, ἵνα σωφρονίσῃ ἀνθρώπους.*

\* Witsius (*Meletem Leiden.*, p. 414,) expresses this excellently well: At quid tandem commisit infelix arbor, ob quam rem tam inopinato muletaretur exitio? Si verborum proprietatem sectemur, omnino nihil. Creaturæ enim rationis expertes, uti virtutis ac vitii, ita et præmii ac pænæ, propriè et strictè loquentes, incapaces sunt. Potest tamen in creaturis istis aliquid existere, quod, analogicâ et symbolicâ quâdam ratione, et vitio et pænæ respondeat. Defectus fructuum in arbore cæteroque generosâ, succulentâ, bene plantatâ, frondosâ, multa pollicente, symbolicè respondet vitio animi degenerantis, luxuriosi, ingrati, simulati, superbi, verâ tamen virtute destituti; subitanea arboris ex imprecatione Christi arefactio, quâ tollitur quidquid in arbore videbatur esse boni, analogiam quandam habet cum justissimâ Christi vindicta, quâ in eos animadvertit, qui benignitate suâ abutuntur. Quemadmodum igitur peccata ista hominum verè merentur pœnam, ita κατ' ἀναλογίαν dici potest, arborem, ita uti descripsimus comparatam, mereri exitium.

† It is very noticeable that the only times that the fig-tree appears prominently in the New Testament, it appears as the symbol of evil; here and at Luke xiii. 6. Isidore of Pelusium (in CRAMER'S *Catena*, in *loc.*) refers to the old tradition, that it was the tree of temptation in Paradise. For traditions of impurity connected with it, see TERTULLIAN, *De Pudicit.*, c. 6. Buffon calls it arbre indécent; for explanation of which see a learned note in SEPP'S *Leben Jesu*, v. 3, p. 225, seq. Bernard (*In Cant. Serm.*, 60, 3): Maledicit ficulnæ pro eo quod non invenit in eâ fructum. Bene ficus, quæ bonâ licet Patriarcharum radice prodierit, nunquam tamen in altum proficere, nunquam se humo attollere voluit, nunquam respondere radici proceritate ramorum, generositate florum, sæcunditate fructuum. Male prorsus tibi cum tuâ radice convenit arbor pusilla, tortuosa, nodosa. Radix enim sancta. Quid eâ dignum tuis apparet in ramis? The Greek proverbial expressions *σύκινος ἀνὴρ*, a poor strengthless man, *σύκινη ἐπιβοηθία*, unhelpful help, supply further parallels.

for understanding and interpreting his act; and the not unfrequent use of this very symbol in the Old Testament, as at Hos. ix. 10; Joel i. 7, must have likewise helped them to this.

But allowing all this, do not the words of St. Mark, "*for the time of figs was not yet,*" acquit the tree even of this figurative guilt? does not the fact thus mentioned defeat the symbol, and put it, so to speak, in contradiction with itself?—does it not perplex us as regards our Lord's conduct, that he should have looked for figs, when they could not have been there;—that he should have been as though indignant, when he did not find them? The simplest, and as it appears to me, the entirely satisfying explanation of this difficulty is the following. At that early period of the year, March or April, neither leaves nor fruit were naturally to be looked for on a fig-tree, (the passages often quoted to the contrary not making out, as I think, their point,\*) nor in ordinary circum-

\* Moreover, all the explanations which go to prove that, according to the natural order of things, in a climate like that of Palestine, there might have been, even at this early time of the year, figs on that tree, either winter figs which had survived till spring, or the early figs of spring themselves, all these, ingenious as they often are, yet seem to me beside the matter. For, without entering further into the question, whether they prove their point or not, they shatter upon that *ὅτι γὰρ ἦν καιρὸς εἰκόων* of St. Mark, from which it is plain that no such calculation of probabilities brought the Lord thither, but those abnormal leaves, which he counted might have been accompanied with abnormal fruit. Four or five dealings with these words have been proposed, by which it is sought to make them *not* mean that which they bear upon their front, and so to disencumber the passage of difficulties, with which otherwise, according to the ordinary interpretations, it is laden. To begin then with the worst, it is, I think, that which places a note of interrogation at the end of these words, and makes the sacred historian to burst out in an exclamation of wonder at the barrenness of the fig-tree,—“For was it not the time of figs?” But this sort of passionate narration—this supplying the reader with his feelings ready made, his wonder, his abhorrence, his admiration—is that, the uniform absence of which is, perhaps, one of the very most striking features of the Gospel narratives, and which, therefore, it is impossible could have found place here. To pass on to one scarcely better, though certainly more ingenious; it is that which Daniel Heinsius first proposed, and to which Knatchbull, Gataker, and others, have assented. His help is in a different pointing and accenting of the passage, as thus, *ὅτι γὰρ ἦν, καιρὸς εἰκόων*: “for where he was, it was the season of figs;”—in the mild climate of Judæa, where, as we know, the fruits of the earth ripened nearly a month earlier than in Galilee. But all MSS. and ancient versions are opposed to this view of the passage; and to express *ibi* loci by *ὅτι γὰρ ἦν* is a very questionable proceeding. Deyling (*Obs. Sac.*, v. 3, p. 277) supports an explanation which is preferable to this. He makes *ὅτι* = *ὄπις*, and *καιρὸς* = *tempus colligendi fructûs*, the time for the gathering the figs. Their harvest had not yet arrived; therefore the Lord could reasonably have looked for some upon the tree; and the words will be an explanation, not of the words “*he found nothing but leaves,*” immediately going before, but of his earlier mentioned going to the tree, expecting to find fruit thereon. This explanation has

stances would any one have sought them there. But that tree, by putting forth leaves, made pretension to be something more than others, to have fruit upon it, seeing that in the fig tree the fruit appears before the leaves.\* This tree, so to speak, vaunted itself to be in advance of

Kuinoel, Wetstein, and others, upon its side. The fact of the remoteness of the words to which this clause will refer, is not fatal to this meaning, for similar instances might be adduced from St. Mark, as xvi. 3, 4; and xii. 12, where the words, "for they knew that he had spoken against them," are an explanation of the fact that they sought to lay hold on him, not of their fearing the people. But *καιρός τῶν καρπῶν*, (Matt. xxi. 34, cf. Luke xx. 10,) on which the upholders of this scheme greatly rely, means the time of the *ripe* fruits, and not the time for their ingathering.

That, however, which has found more favor than any of these, and which Hammond, D'Outrein, and many more have embraced, would make *καιρός* = *καιρός εὐφορος*, and would understand St. Mark to be saying, It was an unfavorable season for figs. A very old, although almost unnoticed reading, ὁ γὰρ καιρός οὐκ ἦν σῦκων, would be still more favorable to this explanation. Yet still we want some example of *καιρός* alone being used as = *καιρός εὐφορος*, for Matt. xiii. 30, Luke xx. 10, which are sometimes adduced, do not satisfy. This, slightly modified, is Olshausen's meaning, and that of a writer in the *Theol. Stud. und Krit.*, 1843, p. 131, *seq.* These do not make *καιρός* exactly "season," since the season for the chief crop, whether good or bad, had not yet arrived, and therefore there would be no room for expressing a judgment about it; but they take it in the sense of weather; temperature; *καιρός* = *tempus opportunum*. If there had been favorable weather, that is, such as had been at once moist and warm, there would have been figs on the tree; not indeed the general crop, but the *figus præcox*, (see PLINY, *H. N.*, l. 15, c. 19) the early spring fig, which was counted an especial delicacy, ("the figs that are first ripe," Jer. xxiv. 2,) and to which Isaiah alludes (xxviii. 4) as "the *hasty* fruit *before the summer*, which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand, he eateth it up" (cf. Hos. ix. 10); or if not these, the late winter fig, which Shaw mentions (WINER'S *Real Wörterbuch*, s. v. *Feigenbaum*) as first ripening after the tree has lost its leaves, and hanging on the tree, in a mild season, into the spring. The writer in the *Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* has certainly brought a passage much to the point in support of this view of *καιρός* as favorable weather. It is this, from the *Hecuba* of Euripides,—

Ὀὔκουν δεῖνδν, εἰ γῆ μὲν κακῆ  
 Τρυχῦσσα καιροῦ θεῖθεν, εἰ δὲ στάχυν φέρει  
 Χρηστή, δ', ἀμαρτυροῦ' ὧν χρεῶν αὐτὴν τυχεῖν,  
 Κακὸν δίδωσι καρπόν.

Upon *καιρός* here, Matthiæ says: Quum *καιρός* omnia complectatur, quæ alicui rei opportuna et consentanea sunt, hoc loco propriè significat omnia ea, quæ agris, ut fructus ferant, accommodata sunt, ut pluviam, cæli commodam temperiem, quo sensu accepisse Euripidem ex adjecto *θεῖθεν* patet. Yet allowing all this, there is a long step between it and proving *καιρός σῦκων* to be = *tempus opportunum figis*. The great advantage of the exposition given in the text is, that it requires no violence to be done to the words, but takes them in that sense in which every one, but for difficulties which seem to follow, would take them.

\* Pliny (*H. N.*, l. 16, c. 49): Ei demum serius folium nascitur quàm pomum.

all the other trees, challenged the passer-by that he should come and refresh himself with its fruit. Yet when the Lord accepted its challenge, and drew near, it proved to be but *as* the others, without fruit as they; for indeed, as the Evangelist observes, the time of figs had not yet arrived;—its fault, if one may use the word, lying in its pretension, in its making a show to run before the rest, when it did not so indeed. It was condemned, not so much for having no fruit, as for this, that not having fruit, it clothed itself abundantly with leaves, with the foliage which, being there, did, according to the natural order of the tree's development, give pledge and promise that fruit should be found on it, if sought.

And this will then exactly answer to the sin of Israel, which under this tree was symbolized,—that sin being not so much that they were without fruit, as that they boasted of so much. Their true fruit, the true fruit of any people before the Incarnation, would have been to own that they had no fruit, that without Christ, without the incarnate Son of God, they could do nothing; to have presented themselves before God, bare and naked and empty altogether. But this was exactly what Israel refused to do. Other nations might have nothing to boast of, but they by their own showing had much.\* And yet on closer inspection, the reality of righteousness was as much wanting on their part as any where besides.

And how should it have been otherwise? "*for the time of figs was not yet;*"—the time for the bare stock and stem of humanity to array itself in bud and blossom, with leaf and fruit, had not come, till its ingrafting on the nobler stock of the true Man. All which anticipated this, which would say that it could *be* any thing or do any thing otherwise than in him and by him, was deceitful and premature. The other trees had nothing, but they did not pretend to have any thing; this tree had nothing, but it gave out that it had much. So was it severally with Gentile and with Jew. The Gentiles were bare of all fruits of righteousness, but they owned it; the Jews were bare, but they vaunted that they were full. The Gentiles were sinners, but they hypocrites and pretenders to boot, and by so much further from the kingdom of God, and more nigh unto a curse.† Their guilt was not that they had not the perfect fruits of faith, for it was not the season for such; the time of these

\* It is not a little remarkable that it was with the fig-leaves that in Paradise Adam attempted to deny his nakedness, and to present himself as other than a sinner before God. (Gen. iii. 7.)

† Witsius (*Meletem. Leiden*, p. 415): *Folia sunt jactatio Legis, templi, cultûs, cærimoniarum, pietatis denique et sanctimoniarum, quarum se specie valdè efferebant. Fructus sunt respicientia, fides, sanctitas, quibus carebant.*

was not yet ; but that, not having, they so boastfully gave out that they had,—not that they were not healed, but that, being unhealed, they counted themselves whole. The Law would have done its work, the very work for which God ordained it, if it had stripped them of these boastful leaves, or rather had prevented them from ever putting them forth.

Here then, according to this explanation, there is no difficulty either in the Lord's going to the tree at that unseasonable time,—he would not have gone, but for those deceitful leaves which announced that fruit was there,—nor in the (symbolical) punishment of the unfruitful tree at this season of the year, when according to the natural order it could not have had any. It was punished not for being without fruit, but for proclaiming by the voice of those leaves that it had such,—not for being barren, but for being false. And this was the guilt of Israel, a guilt so much deeper than the guilt of the nations. The attentive study of the epistle to the Romans supplies the true key to the right understanding of this miracle ; such passages especially as ii. 3, 17—27 ; x. 3, 4, 21 ; xi. 7, 10. Nor should that remarkable parallel, Ezek. xvii. 24 : “ And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord . . . have dried up the green tree and made the dry tree to flourish,” be left out of account.\* And then the sentence, “ *No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever,*” will be just the reversal of the blessing that in them all nations of the earth should be blessed—the symbolic counterstroke to the ratification of the Levitical priesthood, through the putting forth by Aaron's rod, of bud and blossom and fruit in a night. Henceforth the Jewish synagogogue is stricken with a perpetual barrenness;† it once was every thing, but now it is nothing, to the world ; it stands apart, like a thing forbid ; what little it has, it communicates to none ; the curse has come upon it, that no man henceforward shall eat fruit of it for ever.‡

\* It is possible, and some have thought, that our Lord has another allusion to what here had been done in those other words of his, “ If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry ? ” (Luke xxiii. 31 ;) if God so dealt with him “ a green tree,” full of sap, full of life, if he thus bruised and put him to pain, how should he deal with Israel after the flesh, “ a dry” tree, withered and dried up under the power of that curse which had been spoken against it ?

† Witsius (*Meletem. Leiden*, p. 415) : Parabolica ficus maledictio significavit, futurum esse ut populus Israëliticus, justâ Dei indignatione, omni vigore et succo spiritualis fecunditatis privetur, et quia fructus bonorum operum proferre isthoc tempore noluit, dein nec possit. Ac veluti maledictionis sententiam ficus arefactio protinus exepit, sic et Judæorum natio, mox post spretum protervè Messiam, exaruit.

‡ Augustine brings out often and very strikingly the figurative character of this miracle ;—though, with most other expositors, he misses what seems to me the chief stress of this tree's (symbolic) guilt, and that which drew on it the curse, namely, its

And yet this “*for ever*” has its merciful limitation, when we come to transfer the curse from the tree to that of which the tree was as a living parable; a limitation which the word itself\* favors and allows; which lies hidden in it, to be revealed in due time. None shall eat fruit of that tree to the end of the present æon, not until these “times of the Gentiles” are fulfilled. A day indeed will come when Israel, which now says, “I am a dry tree,” shall consent to that word of its true Lord, which of old it denied, “From *me* is thy fruit found,” and shall be arrayed with the richest foliage and fruit of all the trees of the field. The Lord, in his great discourse upon the last things, (Matt. xxiv.) implies this, when he gives this commencing conversion of the Jews under the image of the re-clothing of the bare and withered fig-tree with leaf and bud, as the sign of the breaking in of the new æon, which he does, saying, “Now learn a parable of the fig-tree. When his branch is yet† tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.” (ver. 32, 33.)

It would appear from St. Matthew that some beginnings of the threatened withering began to show themselves, almost as soon as the word of the Lord was spoken; a shuddering fear may have run through all the leaves of the tree, which was thus stricken at its heart. But it was not till the next morning, as the disciples returned, that they took note

running before its time, and by its leaves proclaiming it had fruit, when its true part and that which the season would have justified, would have been to present itself with neither. He, in the following quotations, otherwise so admirable, makes its barrenness, contrasted with its pomp of leaves, to be the stress of its fault, putting out of sight the *untimeliness* of those leaves and of that pretence of fruit which is the most important element in the whole. Thus (*Serm. 77, c. 5*): *Etiam ipsa quæ à Domino facta sunt, aliquid significantia erant, quasi verba, si dici potest, visibilia et aliquid significantia. Quod maximè apparet in eo quod præter tempus poma quæsivit in arbore, et quia non invenit, arbori maledicens aridam fecit. Hoc factum nisi figuratum accipiatur, stultum invenitur; primò quæsivisse poma in illâ arbore, quando tempus non erat ut essent in ullâ arbore: deinde si pomorum jam tempus esset, non habere poma quæ culpa arboris esset? Sed quia significabat, quærere se non so lùm folia, sed et fructum, id est, non solum verba, sed et facta hominum, arefaciendo ubi sola folia invenit, significavit eorum pernam, qui loqui bona possunt, facere bona nolunt. Cf. *Serm, 98, c. 3*: Christus nesciebat, quod rusticus sciebat? quod noverat arboris cultor, non noverat arboris creator? Cùm ergo esuriens poma quæsivit in arbore, significavit se aliquid esurire, et aliquid aliud quærere; et arborem illam sine fructu foliis plenam reperit, et maledixit; et aruit. Quid arbor fecerat fructum non afferendo? Quæ culpa arboris infecunditas? Sed sicut qui fructum voluntate dare non possunt. Illorum est culpa sterilitas, quorum fecunditas est voluntas.*

\* Εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

† Or rather “*is now*,” ἤδη.



of the utter perishing of the tree, which had followed upon that word spoken, so that it was "*dried up from the roots,*" and called their Lord's attention to the same: "*Master, behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst, is withered away.*"\* The Lord will not let the occasion go by without its further lesson. What he had done, they might do the same and more. Faith in God would place them in relation with the same power which he wielded, so that they might do mightier things even than this at which they marvelled so much.

\* In the tone in which this observation was made, an interrogation was implied; they would observe that it was so, and ask of him *how* it was so. This is yet more evident in St. Matthew's "*How soon is the fig-tree withered away!*" by many made an interrogation; thus in Bishop Lloyd's edition, who prints  $\pi\omega\varsigma$  παραχρῆμα ἐξηράνθη ἡ συκῆ; but in that  $\pi\omega\varsigma$  there is not an express question, only an interrogative exclamation.

## XXXII.

### THE HEALING OF MALCHUS'S EAR.

LUKE xxii. 49—51.

THE cutting off the ear of the servant of the high priest by one of the disciples, who would fain have fought for his Master that he should not be delivered to the Jews, is related by all four Evangelists, (Matt. xxvi. 51; Mark xiv. 47; Luke xxii. 50; John xviii. 10;) but the miracle belongs only to St. Luke, for *he* only tells how the Lord made good the wrong which his disciple had inflicted. And we may trace, perhaps, in this Evangelist a double interest which might have specially moved him to the including in his Gospel this work of grace. As a physician, this cure, the only one of its kind which we know of our Lord's performing, the only miraculous healing of a wound inflicted by external violence, would attract his special attention. And then, besides, there was nothing nearer to St. Luke's heart, or that cohered more intimately with the purpose of his Gospel, than the portraying of the Lord on the side of his gentleness, his mercy, and benignity; all which so gloriously shone out in this gracious work in favor of one who was in arms against his life.

The Evangelist, no doubt, knew very well, but has not thought good to tell us, who it was that struck this blow,—whether the deed might still have brought him into trouble, though that appears an exceedingly improbable explanation, or from some other cause. St. Matthew and St. Mark equally preserve silence on this head, and are content with generally designating him, Matthew as "*one of them who were with Jesus,*" Mark as "*one of them which stood by.*" And it is only from St. John that we learn, what perhaps otherwise we might have guessed, but could not certainly have known, that it was St. Peter, who in this way sought to deliver his imperilled Lord. He also alone gives us the

name of the high priest's servant who was smitten; "*the servant's name was Malchus.*" The last may easily have been unknown to the other Evangelists, though it very naturally came within the circle of St. John's knowledge, who had, in some way that is not explained to us, acquaintance with the high priest, (John xviii. 15,) and with the constitution of his household; so accurate an acquaintance, as that he was aware even of so slight a circumstance as that one of those, who later in the night provoked Peter to his denial of Christ, was kinsman of him whose ear Peter had cut off. (ver. 26.)

The whole circumstance is singularly characteristic; the *word*-bearer for the rest of the apostles proves, when occasion requires, the *sword*-bearer also—not indeed in this altogether of a different temper from the others, but showing himself prompter and more forward in action than them all. While they are saying, "*Lord, shall we smite with the sword?*" perplexed between the natural instinct of defence and love of their perilled Lord, on the one side, and his precepts on the other, that they should not resist the evil,—he waits not for the answer, but impelled by the natural courage of his heart,\* and taking no heed of the odds against him, aims a blow at one, probably the foremost of the band,—the first that was daring to lay profane hands on the sacred person of his Lord. This was "*a servant of the high priest's,*" one therefore who, according to the proverb, "*like master like man,*" may very probably have been especially forward in this bad work,—himself a Caiaphas of a meaner stamp. Peter was not likely to strike with any other but a right good will, and no doubt the blow was intended to cleave down the aggressor, though by God's good providence the stroke was turned aside, and grazing the head at which it was aimed, but still coming down with sheer descent, cut off the ear,—the "*right ear,*" as St. Luke and St. John tell us,—of the assailant who thus hardly escaped with his life.

The words with which our Lord rebuked the untimely zeal† of his

\* Josephus characterizes the Galilæans as *μαχιμους*.

† Modern expositors are sometimes a good deal too hard upon this deed of Peter's. Calvin, for instance, who has a great deal more in this tone: *Stulto suo zelo Petrus gravem infamiam magistro suo ejusque doctrinæ inusserat*. The wisest word upon the matter (and on its Old Testament parallel, Exod. ii. 12) is to be found in AUGUSTINE, *Con. Faust.*, l. 22, c. 70. He keeps as far from this unmeasured rebuke as from the absurdity of the Romish expositors, who many of them exalt and magnify this act as one of a holy and righteous indignation. Stella, for instance, (*in loc.*) who likens it to the act of Phinehas, (Num. xxv. 7.) by which he won the high priesthood for his family for ever. Leo the Great, (*Serm.* 50, c. 4.) had already spoken of it in the same way: *Nam et beatus Petrus, qui animosiore constantiâ Domino cōnærebat, et contra*

disciples are differently given by different Evangelists, or rather they have each given a different portion, each one enough to indicate the spirit in which all was spoken. In St. Matthew they are related most at length. That moment, indeed, of uttermost confusion seems to have been no fitting one for a discourse so long as that which he records, not to speak of further words recorded by the others; nor is it at first easy to see how he could have found opportunity for them. But if we suppose that he gave this monition to his disciples, while the healing of Malchus was going forward, and while all were attentive to and wondering at that, the difficulty will disappear;—not to say that his captors, who may have feared resistance or attempts at rescue on the part of his servants, now that they found his words to be words prohibiting aught of the kind, may have been most willing to suffer him to speak unhindered.

Our Lord, when he joins together the taking the sword and perishing with the sword, refers, no doubt, to the primal law, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed,” (Gen. ix. 6,) as again there is probable allusion to these words of his, Rev. xiii. 10. But the application of the words, “*All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword,*” has been sometimes erroneously made, as though Christ, to quiet Peter, were saying, “There is no need for thee to assume the task of the punishing these violent men: they have taken the sword, and by the just judgment of God they will perish by the sword.”\* But the warning against taking the sword connects itself so closely with the command, “*Put up again thy sword into his place,*” and the meaning of the verse following (Matt. xxvi. 53) is so plainly, “Thinkest thou that I need help so poor as thine, when, instead of you, twelve weak trem-

violentorum impetus fervore sanctæ caritatis exarserat, in servum principis sacerdotum usus est gladio, et aurem viri ferocius instantis absceidit. Another finds in the words of the Lord, “*Put up thy sword into the sheath,*” a sanction for the wielding of the civil sword by the Church; for, as he bids us note, Christ does not say, “*Put away thy sword;*” but “*Put up thy sword into the sheath,*”—that is “Keep it in readiness to draw forth again, when the right occasion shall arrive.”—Tertullian, in an opposite extreme, finds in these words a declaration of the unlawfulness of the military service under every circumstance for the Christian (*De Idolol.*, c. 19): *Omniem militem Dominus in Petro exarmaudo discinxit.*

\* Grotius: *Noli, Petre consideratione ejus quæ mihi infertur injuriæ concitator, Deo præripere ultionem. Levia enim sunt vulnera quæ à te pati possunt. Stat enim rata sententia, crudeles istos et sanguinarios, etiam te quiescente, gravissimas Deo daturas pœnas suo sanguine.* This interpretation is a good deal older than Grotius. It is, I think, Chrysostom’s, and Euthymius sees in these words a *προφητεία τῆς διαφθορᾶς τῶν ἐπιλλούτων αὐτῷ Ἰουδαίων.*

bling men, inexpert in war, I might even now\* pray to my Father, and he would give me on the moment twelve legions† of mighty angels on my behalf?"‡—that all the ingenuity which Grotius and others use, and it is much, to recommend the other meaning, cannot persuade to a receiving it.

The passage supplies a fine parallel to 2 Kin. vi. 17 ; a greater than Elisha is here, and by this word would open the spiritual eye of his troubled disciple, and show him the mount of God, full of chariots and horses of fire, armies of heaven which are encamping round him, and whom a beck from him would bring forth, to the utter discomfiture of his enemies. Possibly our blessed Lord, even as he thus spake, was conscious of the temptation to claim this help from God,—the same temptation as constituted the essence of *the* Temptation ; but it is one no sooner offered him, than he rejects it at once ; for how then should that eternal purpose, that will of God, of which Scripture was the outward expression, "*that thus it must be,*" how should this be fulfilled ? (Cf. Zech. xiii. 7.)

In St. John the same entire subordination of his will to the will of the Father, which must hinder him from claiming this unseasonable help, finds its utterance under another image ; that of a cup which he needs must drink : "*The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?*" The image is frequent in Scripture, resting on the thought of some potion which, however bitter, must yet be drained, since such is the will of him who has put it into the hands. Besides Matt. xx. 22,

\* *Ἄφρι*. "Even now at the latest moment, when things are gone so far, when I am already in the hands of mine enemies."—*Καὶ παραστήσει μοι* = *et servitio meo sistet*. (Rom. vi. 19 ; xii. 1.)

† The phrase is remarkable, when connected with the expression *πλήθος στρατιῶν οὐρανίων*, Luke ii. 13, and some other similar language. Without falling in with the dreams of the Areopagite, we may see here intimations of a hierarchy in heaven. Bengel: *Angeli in suos numeros et ordines divisi sunt*.

‡ Jerome: *Non indigeo duodecim apostolorum auxilio, qui possum habere duodecim legiones angelici exercitūs. Maldonatus: Mihil quidem verosimile videtur Christum angelos non militibus, sed discipulis opponere, qui duodecim erant, ac propterea duodecim non plures nec pauciores legiones nominasse, ut indicaret posse se pro duodecim hominibus duodecim legiones habere. The fact that the number of apostles who were even tempted to draw sword in Christ's behalf was, by the apostasy of Judas, not now twelve, but eleven, need not perplex us, or remove us from this interpretation. The Lord contemplates them *in their ideal completeness*: for it was no accident, but rested on a deep fitness that they were twelve, and neither fewer nor more. He does the same, saying in another place, "*Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,*" (Matt. xix. 28,)—when, in like manner, it was not Judas, but his successor that should sit upon a throne.*

23 ; xxvi. 39, where the cup is the cup of holy suffering, there is often, especially in the Old Testament, mention of the cup of God's anger, (Isai. li. 17, 22 ; Ps. xi. 6 ; lxxv. 8 ; Jer. xxv. 15, 17 ; xlix. 12 ; Lam. iv. 21 ; Rev. xiv. 10 ; xvi. 19 ;) in every case the cup having this in common, that it is one from which flesh and blood shrinks back, which a man would fain put away from his lips if he might, though a moral necessity in the first place, and a physical in the second, will not suffer him to do so.

And the words that follow, "*Suffer ye thus far,*" are to be accepted as addressed still to the disciples: "Hold now ;\* thus far ye have gone in resistance, but let it be no further ; no more of this." The other explanation, which makes them to have been spoken by the Lord to those into whose hands he had come, that they should bear with him till he had accomplished the cure, has nothing to recommend it. Having thus checked the too forward zeal of his disciples, and now carrying out into act his own precept, "Love your enemies, . . . do good to them that hate you," he touched the ear of the wounded man, "*and healed him.*" Peter and the rest meanwhile, after this brief flash of a carnal courage, forsook their divine Master, and, leaving him in the hands of his enemies, fled,—the wonder of the crowd at that gracious work of the Lord, or the tumult with the darkness of the night, or these both together, favoring their escape.

\* A comma should find place after *ταρτε*.

### XXXIII.

## THE SECOND MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

JOHN xxi. 1—23.

It almost seemed as though St. John's Gospel had found its solemn completion in the words (ver. 30, 31,) with which the preceding chapter ended; so that this chapter appears, and probably is, in the exactest sense of the word, a *postscript*,—something which the beloved apostle, after he had made an end, thought it important not to leave untold; which he may have added, perhaps, at the request of his disciples, who had often heard delightedly the narrative from his own lips, and desired that before his departure he should set it down, that the Church might be enriched with it for ever.\*

\* The question concerning the authenticity of this chapter was first stirred by Grotius; not that he esteemed it altogether spurious, but added, probably after St. John's death, by the Ephesian elders, who had often heard the history from his lips. Very unlike the other suspicious passage in St. John's Gospel (viii. 1—11), there is no outward evidence of any kind against it. Every MS. possesses it, and there was never a doubt expressed about it in antiquity. He, therefore, and those who have followed him in the same line, Clericus, Semler, Lücke, Schott, (*Comm. de indole cap. ult. Ev. Joh.*, Jen., 1825) can have none but internal evidences, drawn from alleged differences in style, in language, in manner of expression, from St. John's confessed writings, on which to build an argument,—evidences frequently deceptive and always inconclusive, but here even weaker than usual. Every thing marks the hand of the beloved disciple. Not merely do we feel the tone of the narration to be his; for that might be explained by supposing others to be telling what he had often told them; but single phrases and turns of language, unobserved by us at first, and till we have such motives for observing them, bear witness for him. It is he alone who uses *Τιβεριάς*, *θάλασσα τῆς Τιβεριάδος*, (vi. 1, 23) for the lake of Galilee; or *παύσα*, as a word of address from the teacher to the taught (cf. ver. 5 with 1 John ii. 13, 18); *πιάζειν*, which occurs twice in this chapter, (ver. 3, 10) is met with only three times, save in St. John's writings, in the whole New Testament; but is so much a favorite with him,

It was upon the sea of Galilee that this appearance of Christ to his disciples, with the miracle which accompanied it, took place. Doubtless there is a significance to be found in the words, "*Jesus showed,*" or manifested, "*himself,*" as Chrysostom long ago observed,—no other than this, that his body after the resurrection was only visible by a distinct act of his will. From that time the disciples did not, as before, *see* Jesus, but Jesus *appeared unto* or *was seen by them*. It is not for nothing that the language is changed, or that in language of this kind all his appearances after the resurrection are related. (Luke xxiv. 34; Acts xiii. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6, 7, 8.)\* It is the same with angels and all heavenly manifestations; men do not *see* them, as though it lay in their will to do so or not; such language would be inappropriate: but they *appear* to men; (Judg. vi. 12; xiii. 3, 10, 21; Matt. xvii. 3; Luke i. 11; xxii. 43; Acts ii. 3; vii. 2; xvi. 9; xxvi. 16;) are only visible to those for whose sakes they are vouchsafed, and to whom they are willing to show themselves.† Those to whom this manifestation was vouchsafed were Simon Peter and Thomas and Nathanael, James and John, and two other disciples that are not named. It makes something for the current opinion that the Nathanael of St. John, is the Bartholomew of the other Evangelists, thus to find him named not after, but in the midst of, some of the very chiefest apostles. Who were the two unnamed disciples cannot, of course, be known. They too were not improbably

that besides these, there are six instances of its use in his Gospel alone, (vii. 30, 32, 44; viii. 20; x. 39; xi. 57,) to which may be added Rev. xix. 20. Again, *ἰδέω* (ver. 6, 11) is one of his words (vi. 44; xii. 32; xviii. 20,) being found else but once. The double *ἀπόρ* at the beginning of a sentence (ver. 18), is exclusively St. John's, occurring twenty-five times in his Gospel, but never elsewhere. The appellation of Thomas, *Θωμᾶς ὁ λεγομένος Δίδυμος*, (ver. 21, cf. xi. 16; xx. 24) is also exclusively his. Compare, too, ver. 19 with xii. 23 and xviii. 32; the use also of *ἄρα* (ver. 13), with the parallel use at vi. 11. *Ὁὐκ ἴσται*, too, and *πάντα ἐπέτερον* (ver. 16), belong only to him (iv. 51); and the narrator interposing words of his own, as a comment on and explanation of the Lord's words (ver. 19), is quite after the favorite manner of St. John. (ii. 21; vi. 6; vii. 39.) And of these peculiarities many more might be adduced.

\* *Ἐφαιώσωσιν ἑαυτῶν* (see John ii. 11) is here = *ᾤφθη* in the passages quoted above, which might easily be multiplied.

† Thus Ambrose on the appearing of the angel to Zacharias (*Exp. in Luc.*, l. 2. c. 24): *Bene apparuisse dicitur ei, qui cum repente conspexit. Et hoc specialiter aut de Angelis aut de Deo Scriptura divina tenere consuevit; ut quod non potest prævideri, apparere dicitur. . . . Non enim similiter sensibilia videntur, et is in cujus voluntate situm est videri, et cujus nature est non videri, voluntatis videri. Nam si non vult, non videtur: si vult, videtur.* These are Chrysostom's words: *Ἐν τῷ εἰπεῖν ἑφαιώσωσιν αὐτοῖς, τὸ αὐτὸ ἐσημαίνει, ὅτι εἰ μή ᾤθε, καὶ αὐτοῖς ἑαυτῶν διὰ συγκυριαδᾶν ἐφαιώσωσιν, οὐχ ὡσείη, τοῦ σωματος ὄντος ἀφύλητον*



apostles, disciples in the most eminent sense of the word;\* Lightfoot supposes that they were Andrew and Philip.

Peter's declaration that he will go to fish, is not, as has been strangely supposed, a declaration that he has lost his hope in Jesus as the Messiah, renounced his apostleship, and therefore returns to his old occupations, there being no nobler work for him in store. But it was quite in the wise manner of the Jewish teachers, to have a manual trade that they might fall back on in the time of need, and thus not be dependent on their scholars for support; what good service Paul's skill in making tents did him is well known; probably also they found it healthful to their own minds, to have some outward occupation for which to exchange at times their spiritual employments. The words themselves, "*I go a-fishing,*" are not merely a declaration of his intention, but a summons to his friends to accompany him, if they are so minded; whereupon they declare their readiness; "*We also go with thee.*" During all the night, though that is ever accounted the opportunist time for fishing, they caught nothing. When at early dawn the risen Lord stood upon the shore, they did not at first recognize him. Nor even when he addressed them as "*Children,*" did they know that it was he, —the mighty change which had passed upon him at his resurrection had so left him at once the same and yet another. (Cf. John xx. 14, 15.) When they acknowledged in reply to his question, "*Have ye any meat?*" the ill success which had attended their labors of the night, he bade them cast in their net on the right side of the ship, promising that it should not be in vain. And they, though taking it even now but for the counsel of a kind and, it might be, a skilful stranger, were obedient to his word: "*They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.*"

As before, the Lord had made himself known in his higher character through a marvellous success of the like kind, so does he now; yet it is not Peter on the present occasion, but John, that first recognizes in whose presence they are. Thereupon he "*saieth unto Peter, It is the Lord.*" Both the apostles come wonderfully out in their proper characters: he of the eagle eye first detects the presence of the Beloved, and then Peter, the foremost ever in act, as John is profoundest in speculation, unable to wait till the ship should be brought to land, throws himself into the sea that he may find himself the sooner at the feet of his Lord.† He was before "*naked,*" stripped, that is, for labor, wear-

\* St. John does not know the word *ἀπόστολος* as a term for the twelve. He uses it but once, (xiii. 16,) and then generally for one that is outsent.

† Chrysostom: Ὡς δὲ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτὸν, πάλιν τὰ ἰδιώματα τῶν οἰκείων ἐπιδέκνυνται

ing only the tunic, or garment close to the skin, and having put off his upper and superfluous garments :\* for the word “naked” means no more, and is continually used in this sense ; but now he girded himself with his fisher’s coat.† as counting it unseemly to appear without it in the presence of his Lord. Some have supposed that he walked on the sea ; but we have no warrant to multiply miracles, and the words, “cast himself into the sea,” do not look like this. Rather, he swam and waded to the shore.‡ The distance was not more than about “two hundred cubits,”§ that is, about one hundred yards. The other disciples followed

τρόπον οἱ μαθηταὶ Πέτρος καὶ Ἰωάννης· ὁ μὲν γὰρ θερμότερος, ὁ δὲ ὑψηλότερος ἦν· καὶ ὁ μὲν ὀξύτερος ἦν, ὁ δὲ ἑλαστικότερος.

\* The word is of continual use in this sense. Thus Virgil gives this advice to the ploughman. *Nudus ara*, (cf. *Matt.* xxiv. 18,) which he has borrowed from Hesiod, who will have him *γυμνὸν σπείρειν, γυμνὸν τὲ βοασεῖν*. So, too, Cincinnatus was found “naked” at the plough, when he was called to be Dictator, and sent for his toga that he might present himself before the Senate (*PLINY, H. N.*, l. 18, c. 4) ; and Plutarch says of Phocion, that, in the country and with the army, he went always without sandals and “naked,” (*ἀνυπόδητος ἀεὶ καὶ γυμνὸς ἰβιάιζεν*) : and Grotius quotes from Eusebius a yet apter passage than any of these, in which one says, *ἤσαν γυμνὸς ἐν τῷ λινῷ ἰσθήματι*. The Athenian jest that the Spartans showed to foreigners their virgins naked is to be taken with these limitations—with only the chiton or himation. (*MUELLER’S Dorians*, l. 4, c. 2, § 3.) Cf. *1 Sam.* xix. 24 ; *Isai.* xx. 3 ; at the last of which passages the Deist Tindal, in his ignorance, scoffs, as though God had commanded an indecency, but which both are to be explained in the same manner. (See *DEYLING’S Obs. Sac.*, v. 4, p. 888, *seq.*, and the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Ant.*, s. v. *Nudus*.)

† This seems to me the meaning ; in Deyling’s words (*Obs. Sac.*, v. 4, p. 890) : *Ἐπειδὴ τὸν ad Christum iturus sibi circumjiciebat, ne minus honestus et modestus in conspectum Domini veniret*. Others, however, as Euthymius, explain the passage differently—that this *ἑπιδύτης* was the only garment which he had on ; but as regarded even that, he was *ἄζωστος*, and so, in a manner, *γυμνός*. But going to the Lord, he girt it up ; whether for comeliness, or that it might not, being left loose, hinder him in swimming. Thus Lampe. The matter would be clear, if we could know certainly what the *ἑπιδύτης* was. Yet the etymology plainly points out that it is not the *under* garment or vest, worn close to the skin, which is rather *ὑποδύτης*, (see *Passow*, s. vv.) but rather that worn *over all*, as (*1 Sam.* xviii. 4), the robe which Jonathan gives to David is called *τὸν ἐπιδύτην τὸν ἱπανάω* (LXX.) This is certainly the simplest and preferable view of the words ; that Peter, being stripped before, now hastily threw his upper garment over him, which yet he girt up, that it might not form an impediment in swimming.

‡ Ambrose : *Periculoso compendio religiosum maturavit obsequium*.

§ Ovid’s advice to the fisher is to keep this moderate distance :

*Nec tamen in medias pelagi te pergere sedes  
Admoneam, va-tique maris tentare profundum.  
Inter utrumque loci melius moderare finem, &c.*

more slowly, for they were encumbered with the net and its weight of fishes, which they drew with them to land. There they find a fire kindled, with fish laid on it, and bread. They are bidden to bring also of their fish, and to unite them for the meal with those already preparing.\* Peter, again the foremost, drew up the net, which was fastened, no doubt, to the ship, on the beach. The very number of the fish it contained, “*an hundred and fifty and three,*” is mentioned, with also the remarkable circumstance, that although they were so many and so large—“*great fishes,*”—yet, differently from that former occasion, (Luke v. 6,) the net was not broken by their weight, or by their efforts to escape.

Now we can scarcely believe that all this happened, or that it was all recorded in its minuteness and its details, without some meaning more than lies upon the surface; indeed, the whole is told with an emphasis which will hardly allow us to rest content with such a supposition. Rather here, as we have seen so often before, Christ is speaking to us by his acts. Nor can I doubt that Augustine has rightly attributed in more places than one a symbolical meaning to this miracle; † and that, whether or not we may consent to every detail of his interpretation, yet in the outline and main features he has given the true one. He brings this miraculous draught of fishes in comparison with the other which fell out before the resurrection, and sees in that first, the figure of the Church as it now is, and as it now gathers its members from the world; in this the figure of the Church as it shall be after the resurrection, with the great incoming, the great sea-harvest of souls, which then shall find place. ‡ Then on that first occasion the apostles were

\* The abundance and the excellency of the fish in this lake has been often remarked. Thus Robinson (*Biblical Researches*, v. 2, p. 261): “The lake is full of fishes of various kinds,” and he instances sturgeon, chub, and bream, adding, “We had no difficulty in procuring an abundant supply for our evening and morning meal; and found them delicate and well flavored.”

† Augustine (*Serm.* 248. c. 1): Nunquam hoc Dominus juberet, nisi aliquid significare vellet, quod nobis nosse expediret. Quid ergo pro magno potuit ad Jesum Christum pertinere, si pisces caperentur aut si non caperentur? Sed illa piscatio, nostra erat significatio.

‡ Augustine (*In Ev. Joh., Tract.* 122): Sicut hoc loco qualiter in seculi fine futura sit [Ecclesia], ita Dominus aliâ piscatione significavit Ecclesiam qualiter nunc sit. Quod autem illud fecit in initio prædicationis suæ, hoc verò post resurrectionem suam, hinc ostendit illam capturam piscium, bonos et malos significare, quos nunc habet Ecclesia; istam verò tantummodo bonos quos habebit in æternum, completa in fine hujus seculi resurrectione mortuorum. Denique ibi Jesus, non sicut hic in littore stabat, quando jussit pisces capi, sed ascendens in unam navim . . . dixit ad Simonem, Duc in altum, et laxate retia vestra in capturam . . . Ibi retia non mittuntur in dexteram, ne solos significant bonos, nec in sinistram, ne solos malos; sed indiffe-

not particularly bidden to cast the net to the right hand or to the left; for, had he said to the right, it would have implied that none should be taken but the good,—if to the left, that only the bad; while yet in the present mixed condition of the Church, both bad and good are inclosed in the nets; but now he says, “*Cast the net on the right side of the ship,*” implying that now all who should be taken should be good.\* Then the nets were broken with the multitude of fishes, so that all were not secured which once were within them;—and what are the schisms and divisions of the present condition of the Church, but rents and holes through which numbers, that impatiently bear to be restrained in the net, break away from it? but now, in the end of time, “*for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.*” Then the fish were brought into the ship, which yet was itself still on the unquiet sea, even as it is thus that men in the present time who are taken for Christ, are brought into the Church, still itself exposed to the world’s tempests: but now the nets are drawn up to land, to the safe and quiet shore of eternity.† Then the ships were well nigh sunken with their burden, for so is it with the ship of the Church,—encumbered with evil livers till it well nigh makes shipwreck altogether: but nothing of a like kind is mentioned here.‡ There it is merely mentioned that a great multitude

reuter, Laxate, inquit, retia vestra in capturam, ut permixtos intelligamus bonos et malos: hic autem inquit, Mittite in dextram navigii rete, ut significaret eos qui stabant ad dexteram, solos bonos. Ibi rete propter significanda schismata rumpebatur: hic verò, quoniam tunc jam in illà summà pace sanctorum nulla erunt schismata, pertinuit ad Evangelistam dicere, Et cùm tanti essent, id est, tam magni, non est scissum rete; tanquam illud respiceret ubi scissum est, et in illius mali comparatione commendaret hoc bonum. Cf. *Serm.* 248—252; and also the *Brer. Coll. con Donat.*, l. 3; *Quæst.* 83, qu. 8; and Gregory the Great, (*Hom. in Evang.* 24) who altogether follows the exposition of Augustine, making indeed far more of Peter’s part, especially of his bringing of the net to land, which is easily to be accounted for, the idea of the Papacy having in his time developed itself further.

\* This, because the *right* hand is ever the hand of value; thus, the sheep are placed at the *right* hand. (Matt. xxv. 33.) Even the *right* eye, if needs is, shall be plucked out,—the *right* hand cut off. (Matt. v. 29, 30.) Again, it is threatened that even the *right* eye of the idol shepherd, the eye of spiritual understanding, shall be utterly darkened. (Zech. xi. 17.) Ezekiel lies on his left side for Israel, but on his *right* for Judah, (*Ezek.* iv. 4, 6:) and this because Judah with all its sins was not yet an apostate Church. (*Hos.* xi. 12) Cf. *Gen.* xlviii. 17; *1 Kin.* ii. 19; *Acts* vii. 55.

† Augustine (*Serm.* 251, c. 3): In illà piscatione non ad litus adtracta sunt retia: sed ipsi pisces qui capti sunt, in naviculis fusi sunt. Hic autem traxerunt ad litus. Spera finem seculi. Grotius has a glimpse of the same thought, when upon the words, “*Jesus stood on the shore.*” (ver. 4.) he adds: Significans se per Resurrectionem jam esse in vado, ipsos in salo versari. Cf. Gregory the Great, *Hom.* 24 in *Evang.*

‡ Augustine (*Serm.* 249): Implentur navigia duo propter populos duos de circum-

were inclosed, but here a definite number, even as the number of the elect is fixed and pre-ordained;\* and there, no doubt, small and great fishes, for nothing to the contrary is said; but here they are all “*great*,” for so shall they all be that belong to that kingdom, being equal to the angels.†

That which follows is obscure, and without the key which the symbolical explanation supplies, would be obscurer yet. What is the meaning of this meal which they found ready prepared for them on the shore, with the Lord’s invitation that they should come and share it? It could not be needful for him with his risen body, and as little for them, whose dwellings were near at hand. But we must continue to see an under-meaning, and a rich and deep one, in all this. As that large capture of fish was to them the pledge and promise of a labor that should not be in vain,‡ so the meal, when the labor was done, a meal of the Lord’s own preparing, and *upon the shore*, was the symbol of the great festival in heaven with which, after their earthly toil was over, he would refresh his servants, when he should cause them to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom. And as they were bidden to bring

cisione et præputio: et sic implentur, ut premantur et pœne mergantur. Hoc quod significat gemendum est. Turba turbavit Ecclesiam. Quàm magnum numerum fecerunt malè viventes, prementes et *gementes* [pœnè mergentes?]. Sed propter pisces bonos non sunt mersa navigia.

\* Augustine and others have very laborious calculations to show why this number of fishes was exactly one hundred and fifty and three, and the mystery that is here. But the significance is not in its being that particular number, for the number seems chosen to exclude that, in this unlike the hundred and forty-four thousand ( $12 \times 12$ ) of the Apocalypse, (vii. 4;) but in its being a fixed and definite number at all; just as in Ezekiel’s temple, (ch. 40, seq.,) each measurement is not, and cannot be made, significant, but that it is all by measurement is most significant.—telling us, that here, in the rearing of the spiritual temple, no caprice or wilfulness of men is to find room, but that all is laid down according to a pre-ordained purpose and will of God. To number, as to measure and to weigh, is a Divine attribute. Compare Job xxviii. 25; xxxviii. 5; Isai. xl. 12; and the noble debate in St. Augustine, (*De Lib. Arbit.*, l. 2 c. 11—16,) on all the works of wisdom being by number.

† Augustine *Serm.* 248, c. 3; Quis est enim ibi tunc parvus, quando erunt æquales Angelis Dei?

‡ Maldonatus: Missurus erat paulò post Christus discipulos suos in omnem terrarum orbem, quasi in altum ac latum mare, ut homines piscarentur. Poterant inscitiam, poterant imbecillitatem suam excusare, se homines esse litterarum rudes, id est, piscandi imperitos, paucos præterea et infirmos, qui posse se tot tamque grandes pisces capere, tot oratores, tot tantosque philosophos irretitæ et a sententiâ dimovere? Voluit ergo Christus exemplo artis propriæ docere id ipsos suis viribus suâque industriâ facere nullo modo posse, idque significat quod totam laborantes noœm nihil ceperant: ipsius vero ope atque auxilio facillimè facturos.

of their fish to that meal, so should the souls which they had taken for life be their crown and rejoicing in that day, should help and contribute to their gladness then.\*

When the Evangelist tells us that at this meal "none of the disciples durst ask him, *Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord;*" this again is difficult; for if they knew, where was even the temptation to make this inquiry? and yet it seems on the surface of the narration that they were tempted to ask such a question, and were only hindered by the solemn fear and awe which was shed on them by his presence. But the right meaning of the words, no doubt, is that none of them dared to show so much of unbelief and uncertainty as would have been involved in the question "*Who art thou?*" There was shed over them such a mysterious awe, such a sense of the presence of their beloved Master, witnessing for itself in the inmost depths of their spirits, that, unusual and unlike as was his outward appearance to that whereunto their eyes were accustomed, yet none of them durst ask for a clearer evidence that it was he, even though it would have been a satisfaction to them to hear from his own lips that it was indeed himself and no other.†

The most interesting conversation which follows hangs too closely upon this miracle to be omitted; in fact, as appears almost universally the case with St. John, the miracle is not recorded so much for its own sake, as for the sake of that which grows out of it. Here, after the Lord has opened the eyes of his apostles to the greatness of their future work, and given to them in type a prophetic glimpse both of their successful labor and their abundant reward, he now declares to them the one condition both of accomplishing this work, and inheriting this reward. Love to Christ, and the unreserved yielding up of self to God—these were the sole conditions, and all which follows is to teach this; so that the two portions of the chapter are intimately connected, and together

\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh., Tract. 123*): *Piscis assus, Christus est passus. Ipse est et panis qui de celo descendit. Hinc incorporatur Ecclesia ad participandam beatitudinem sempiternam.* Ammonius: *Τό, Δεῦτε ἀσπείθετε, αἰετμα ἔχει ὁ θυγος, ὅτι μετὰ τοὺς πόνοὺς ἐπιτίθεται τοὺς ἁγίους ἀπαλαύσει καὶ τρυφῇ καὶ ἀπόλαυσι.* Gregory the Great (*Hom. 21 in Evang.*) notes how the number who here feast with the Lord are seven, the number of perfection and completion.

† Augustine (*In Ev. Joh., Tract. 123*): *Si ergo sciebant, quid opus erat ut interrogarent? Si autem non opus erat, quare dictum est, non audebant; quasi opus esset, sed timore aliquo non auderent? Sensus ergo hic est: Tanta erat evidentia veritatis, quā Jesus illis discipulis apparebat, ut eorum non solum negare, sed nec dubitare quidem ullus auderet: quoniam si quisquam dubitaret, utique interrogare deberet. Sic ergo dictum est, Nemo audebat eum interrogare, Tu quis es: ac si diceretur, Nemo audebat dubitare quod ipse esset. Cf. Chrysostom's striking words *In Joh., Hom. 87.**

form a complete whole. When the meal was ended, “*Jesus said unto Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?*” with an evident allusion to Peter’s boasting speech, “*Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended,*” (Matt. xxvi. 33,) as is proved by Peter’s answer, wherein appealing to the Lord, the Searcher of hearts, he affirms that indeed he loves him, but does not now cast any slight by comparison on the love of his fellow-disciples.\* The main object of the Lord in his rejoinder, “*Feed my sheep,*” “*Feed my lambs,*” is not to say, “*Show then thy love in act,*” but rather, “*I restore to thee thy apostolic function; this grace is thine, that thou shalt yet be a chief shepherd of my flock.*”† It implies, therefore, the fullest forgiveness of the past, since none but the forgiven could rightly declare the forgiveness of God. The question, “*Lovest thou me?*”‡ is thrice repeated, that by three solemn affirmations the apostle may efface his three denials of his Lord.§ At last, upon the third repetition of the

\* Augustine (*Serm.* 147, c. 2): Non potuit dicere nisi, Amo te: non ausus est dicere, plus his. Noluit iterum esse mendax. Suffecerat ei testimonium perhibere cordi suo: non debuit esse iudex cordis alieni.

† The other, doubtless, is the commonest view of the connection of the words. Thus Augustine takes it a hundred times, as *Serm.* 146, c. 1: Tamquam ei diceret, Amas me! In hoc ostende quia amas me, Pasce oves meas. But the view expressed in the text is that of Cyril, Chrysostom, Euthymius. Thus, too, Calvin: Nunc illi tam libertas docendi quam auctoritas restituitur, quarum utramque amiserat suâ culpâ.

‡ Ἀγαπήν and φιλεῖν are here so interchangeably used, that the Lord on his first and second putting of the question to Peter says, ἀγαπής με; on the third, φιλεῖς, while Peter every time answers with the latter word, φιλεῶ σε. If there be any significance in the variation, our version has lost it, though the Latin has at least marked it by using for the first, diligo; for the second, amo,—words which Cicero more than once distinguishes, making the last to imply more of affection than the first. But there hardly is such here (see AUGUSTINE, *De Civ. Dei*, l. 14, c 7); not that ἀγαπήν and φιλεῖν have not each of them certain meanings, which the other will not admit, or that there are not places where the one could by no means be substituted for the other; yet here they appear indifferently used. (See TITTMAN’S *Synonyms*, c. 4.) Still more confidently one may affirm the βόσκειν and ποιμαίνειν of these verses to be entire synonyms.

§ Augustine (*In Ec. Joh., Tract.* 123); Redditur negationi trinæ trina confessio; ne minùs amori lingua serviat quàm timori: et plus vocis elicuisse videatur mors imminens, quàm vita præsens. *Enarr. in Ps.* xxxvii. 13: Donec trinâ voce amoris solveret trinam vocem negationis. *Serm.* 285: Odit Deus præsumptores de viribus suis; et tumorem istum in eis, quos diligit, tamquam medicus secat. Secando quidem infert dolorem; sed firmat postea sanitatem. Itaque resurgens Dominus commendat Petro oves suas illi negatori; sed negatori quia præsumptori, postea pastori quia amatori. Nam quare ter interrogat amantem, nisi ut compungat ter negantem? Cf. *Enarr.* 2<sup>a</sup> in *Ps.* xc. 12. So Ammonius: Διὰ τριῶν τῶν ἐρωτήσεων καὶ καταθέσεων ἐξαλείφει τὰς

question, Peter was saddened, as though the Lord doubted his word; and with yet more emphasis than before, appeals to his Saviour in his all-knowing and all-searching character, whether it was not true that indeed he loved him; "*Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.*"\*

There does not seem any thing in the distinction which some have made between the two commands, "*Feed my lambs*" and "*Feed my sheep,*" as though the first were the more imperfect Christians, the little children in Christ; the other the more advanced, the grown men.† And still more groundless and trifling is the interpretation made in the interests of Rome, as though the "*lambs*" are the laity, and the "*sheep*" the clergy; and that here to Peter, and in him to the Roman pontiffs, was given dominion over both. The commission should at least have run, Feed my sheep, Feed my shepherds, if any conclusions of the kind were to be drawn from it, though an infinite deal would even then have remained to be proved.‡

But "*Feed my sheep,*" is not all. This life of labor is to be crowned with a death of painfulness; such is the way, with its narrow and strait gate, which even for a Peter is the only one which will lead to eternal life. The Lord would show him beforehand what great things he must suffer for his sake. For this is often his manner with his elect servants, with an Ezekiel, (iii. 25,) with a Paul, (Acts xxi. 11,) and now with a Peter. "*When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest, but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.*" There cannot, I think, be a doubt that there is allusion here to the crucifixion of Peter, since St. John himself declared that Jesus spake thus, "*signifying by what death he should glorify God;*"

τρεῖς φορές τῆς ἀσκήσεως, καὶ διὰ λόγον ἵπαιροθῆ τὰ ἐν λόγοις γεύματα πραισματα. Not otherwise the Church hymn,—

Tēr confessus ter negatum,  
Gregem pascis ter donatum,  
Vnâ, verbo, precibus.

\* Augustine (*Serm.* 253, c. 1): *Contristatus est Petrus. Quid contristaris, Petre, quia ter respondes amorem? Oblitus est trinum timorem? Sine interroget te Dominus: medicus est qui te interrogat, ad sanitatem pertinet, quod interrogat. Noli tædio affici. Expecta, impleatur numerus dilectionis, ut deleat numerum negationis.*

† Wetstein: Oves istæ quo tempore Petro committebantur, erant adhuc teneri agni, noviti discipuli à Petro ex Judæis et gentibus adducendi. Quando verò etiam oves committit, significat eum ad senectutem victurum, et ecclesiam constitutam et ordinatam visurum esse.

‡ See BERNARD, *De Consid.*, l. 2, c. 8.



and no tolerable ground exists for calling in question the tradition of the Church, that such was the manner of the apostle's martyrdom.\* Doubtless it is here *obscurely* intimated; but this is of the very nature of prophecy, and there is quite enough in the description to show that the Lord had this and no other manner of death in his eye. The stretched forth hands are the hands extended upon either side on the transverse bar of the cross.† The girding by another is the binding to the cross, for the sufferer was attached to the instrument of punishment not only with nails, but also was bound thereto with cords.‡ It cannot be meant by the bearing "*whither thou wouldst not,*" that there should be any reluctancy on the part of Peter to glorify God by his death, except indeed the reluctancy which there always is in the flesh to suffering and pain; which yet in his case, as in the Lord's, (compare Matt. xxvi. 39,) should be overruled by the higher willingness to do and to suffer the perfect will of God. In this sense, as it was a violent death,—a death which others chose for him,—a death from which flesh and blood would naturally shrink, it was "*whither he would not;*" though, in a higher sense, as it was the way to a nearer vision of God, it was that at which he had all his life been aiming; and then he was borne whither most he would; and the exulting words of another apostle, at the near approach of his martyrdom, (2 Tim. iv. 6—8,) would have suited his lips just as well.§

\* EUSEBIUS, *Hist. Eccl.* l. 2, c. 25; l. 3, c. 1.

† The passages most to the point in showing that this would naturally be one of the images which one, who, without naming, yet wished to indicate crucifixion, would use, are this from Seneca (*Consol. ad Marciam*, c. 20): *Video istic cruces non unius quidem generis: . . . alii brachia patibulo explicuerunt;* and Tertullian (*De Pudic.*, c. 22): *In patibulo jam corpore expanso:* who says again with allusion to the stretching out of the hands in prayer; *Paratus est ad omne supplicium ipse habitus orantis Christiani.* And the following phrase occurs in ARRIAN'S *Epictetus*, l. 3, c. 26: *ἐκτείνας σαυτὸν, ὡς οἱ ἰσταυρομένοι.* The passage adduced by some from Plautus,

Credo ego tibi esse eundem extra portam,  
Dispensis manibus patibulum quum habebis,

is not quite satisfying; since this is most probably an allusion to the marching the criminal along, with his arms attached to the *fork* upon his neck, before he was himself fastened to the cross; or perhaps not to be followed up by actual execution at all, but only as itself an ignominious punishment. (See BECKER'S *Gallus*, v. 1, p. 131, and WETSTEIN, in loc.)

‡ So TERTULLIAN (*Scorp.*, c. 15): *Tunc Petrus ab altero cingitur, cum cruce astringitur;* or perhaps it may be, as Lücke suggests, the girding the sufferer round the middle, who otherwise would be wholly naked on the cross. He quotes from the *Evang. Nicod.*, c. 10: *Ἐξέδυσαν οἱ στρατιῶται τὸν Ἰησοῦν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, καὶ περιέζωσαν αὐτὸν λεπτῶν.*

§ Chrysostom (*In Joh.*, Hom. 88): *Ὅπου οὐ θέλεις τῆς φύσεως λέγει τὸ συμπαθῆς καὶ*

Nor may we exclude the symbolical meaning, which we have found in the earlier parts of the chapter, from this part also. The "girding himself" is to be taken as the sign and figure of promptness and an outward activity, (Exod. xii. 11 ; Luke xii. 35 ; 1 Pet. i. 13 ; Ephes. vi. 14 ; ) and, in fact, our Lord is saying to Peter, "When thou wert young, thou actedst for me, thou wentest whither thou wouldest, thou wert free to work for me, and to choose thy field of work ; but when thou art old, thou shalt learn another lesson, a higher and a harder ; thou shalt suffer for me ; thou shalt no more choose thy work, but others shall choose it for thee, and that work shall be the work of passion rather than of action." Such is the history of the Christian life, not in Peter's case only, but this is the very course and order of it in almost all of God's servants ; it is begun in action, it is perfected in suffering. In the last, lessons are learned which the first could never teach ; graces exercised, which but for this, would not at all, or would only have very weakly, existed.

Thus it was, for instance, with a John Baptist. He begins with Jerusalem and all Judea flowing to him to listen to his preaching ; he ends with lying long, a seemingly forgotten captive, in the dungeon of Machærus. So was it with a St. Chrysostom. The chief cities of the world wait upon him with reverence and homage while he is young, and he goes whither he would ; but when he is old, he is borne whither he would not, up and down, a sick and suffering exile. Thus should it be also with this great apostle. It was only in this manner that whatever of self-will and self-choosing survived in him still, should be broken and abolished, that he should be brought into an entire emptiness of self, a perfect submission to the will of God.

And then the Lord, as he has shown him the end, will also show him the way ; for "*when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.*" Now these words do more than merely signify, in a general way, "Be thou an imitator of me." Such an explanation would show that we had altogether failed in realizing to ourselves this solemn scene, as it was on this day enacted on the shore of Gennesaret. That scene was quite as much in deed as in word ; and here, at the very moment that the Lord spake the words, it would seem that he took some paces along the rough and rocky shore, bidding Peter to do the same ; thus setting forth to him in a figure his future life, which should be a following of his divine Master in the rude and rugged way of Christian

τῆς σαουκῆς τῆς ἀνάγκης, καὶ ὅτι ἄκουσα ἀπορρήγνυσθαι τοῦ σώματος ἡ ψυχῆ. Cf. Augustine's beautiful words, *Serm.* 299, and *Serm.* 173, c. 2: Quis enim vult mori? Prostrans nemo: et ita nemo ut beato Petro diceretur, Alter te cinget, et feret quo tu non vis.

action. That all this was not so much spoken as done, is clear from that which follows, which only is explicable so. Peter, “*turning about,*” —looking, that is, behind him,—“*seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved;*” —words not introduced idly, and as little so the allusion to his familiarity at the Paschal supper, but to explain the boldness of John in following unbidden;\* him he seeth “*following*” and inquires, “*Lord, what shall this man do?*” He would know what shall be his lot, and what the issue of his earthly conversation: shall he, too, follow by the same rugged path?

It is not very easy to determine the spirit out of which this question proceeded. Augustine thinks it is that of one who was concerned that his friend should seem to be left out, and not summoned to the honor of the same close following of his Lord.† Others, however, have oftentimes taken this question in quite a different sense; that it is a question put more in the temper of Martha, when she said to the Lord, concerning her sister Mary, “*Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?*” (Luke x. 40,) being not pleased that Mary should remain quietly sitting at Jesus’ feet, while she was engaged in active service for him.‡ Certainly the rebuke which here, as there, the

\* Bengel: Ut autem in cœnâ illâ ita nunc quoque locum quærebat, et se familiariter insinuabat, propemodùm magis, quàm Petrus libenter perferret.

† *Serm.* 253, c. 3: Quomodo ego sequor et ipse non sequitur! This, too, is Chrysostom’s explanation. Jerome’s *Adr. Jovin.*, l. 1, c. 26,) is slightly different: Nolens deserere Johannem, cum quo semper fuerat copulatus. In later times it was often understood, as that in Peter’s words spoke out the jealousy of the practical life for the contemplative, Martha’s dissatisfaction with Mary. The first thinks hardly of the other, counts it to be a shunning of the cross, a shrinking from earnest labor in the Lord’s cause,—would fain have it also to be a martyr not merely in will, but in deed. See the very interesting extracts from the writings of the Abbot Joachim, in NEANDER’S *Kirch. Gesch.*, v. 5, p. 440.

‡ It is partly no doubt their general character, as developed through the Gospel history, but mainly this passage, which has caused the two apostles, St. Peter and St. John, to be accepted in the Church as the types, one of Christian action, the other of Christian contemplation; one, like the servants, *working* for its absent Lord; the other, like the virgins, *waiting* for him: the office of the first, the active laboring for Christ, to cease and pass away, because the time would arrive when there should be no more need for it; but of the other, the contemplation of God, to remain (*μένειν*) till the Lord came, and not then to cease, but to continue for evermore. Thus Augustine in a noble passage, of which I can only give a fragment or two (*In Ec. Joh., Tract.* 124): Duas itaque vitas sibi divinitus prædicatas et commendatas novit Ecclesia, quarum est una in fide, altera in specie; una in tempore peregrinationis, altera in æternitate mansionis; una in labore, altera in requie; una in viâ, altera in patriâ; una in opere actionis, altera in mercede contemplationis; . . . una bona et mala discernit, altera quæ sola bona sunt, cernit: ergo una bona est, sed adhuc misera, altera melior

question calls out, implies that the source out of which it proceeded, whether this or another, was not altogether pure. Peter, understanding well what that "*Follow me,*" addressed to himself, meant, may have felt a moment's jealousy at that easier portion which seemed allotted to his fellow apostle.

This was most likely the thought, and then the rebuke exactly meets it. Peter had perceived what the leaving John, and bidding *him* to follow, implied. John was to "*tarry,*" doing a still work in the Church; the rougher paths were not for his treading, but rather he was to be perfected by another discipline; not borne away from the earth in the fire-chariot of a painful martyrdom, but, tarrying long, he should crown a peaceful and honored old age by a natural death. It was not, indeed, that he, or any other saint, should escape his share of worldly tribulation, or that the way for him, or for any, should be other than a straight way. Yet do we see daily how the sufferings of different members of the kingdom are allotted in very different proportions; with some, they are comparatively few and far between, while for others, their whole life seems a constant falling from one trial to another. And our Lord's answer to Peter's speech is in fact this: "Hast thou a right to complain, if it be thus? What is it to thee how I apportion the lots of my other servants? Nay, if I were to will that he should never see death—that he should altogether escape that narrow and painful passage into life, and tarry\* till my coming again, what would that be to thee? Do thou thine allotted task; *follow thou me.*"†

St. John mentions by the way how these words of his Lord were misunderstood by some, who had from thence assumed that he was never to die, but to continue among the living until the time of Christ's return; an interpretation which he anxiously disclaims, showing that

et beata. Ista significata est per Apostolum Petrum, illa per Johannem. Tota hic agitur ista usque in hujus seculi finem, et illic invenit finem: differtur illa complenda post hujus seculi finem, sed in futuro seculo non habet finem. Ideo dicitur huic. Sequere me: de illo autem, Sic cum volo manere donec veniam, quid ad te? Tu me sequere . . . Quod apertius ita dici potest, Perfecta me sequatur actio, informata mee passionis exemplo; inchoata verò contemplatio maneat donec venio, perficienda cum venero. This view remarkably re-appeared in the twelfth century in connection with the Evangelium Eternum (SEANDER'S *Kirch. Gesch.*, v. 5, p. 410, seq.)

\* For the same use of *parare*, see 1 Cor. xv. 6.

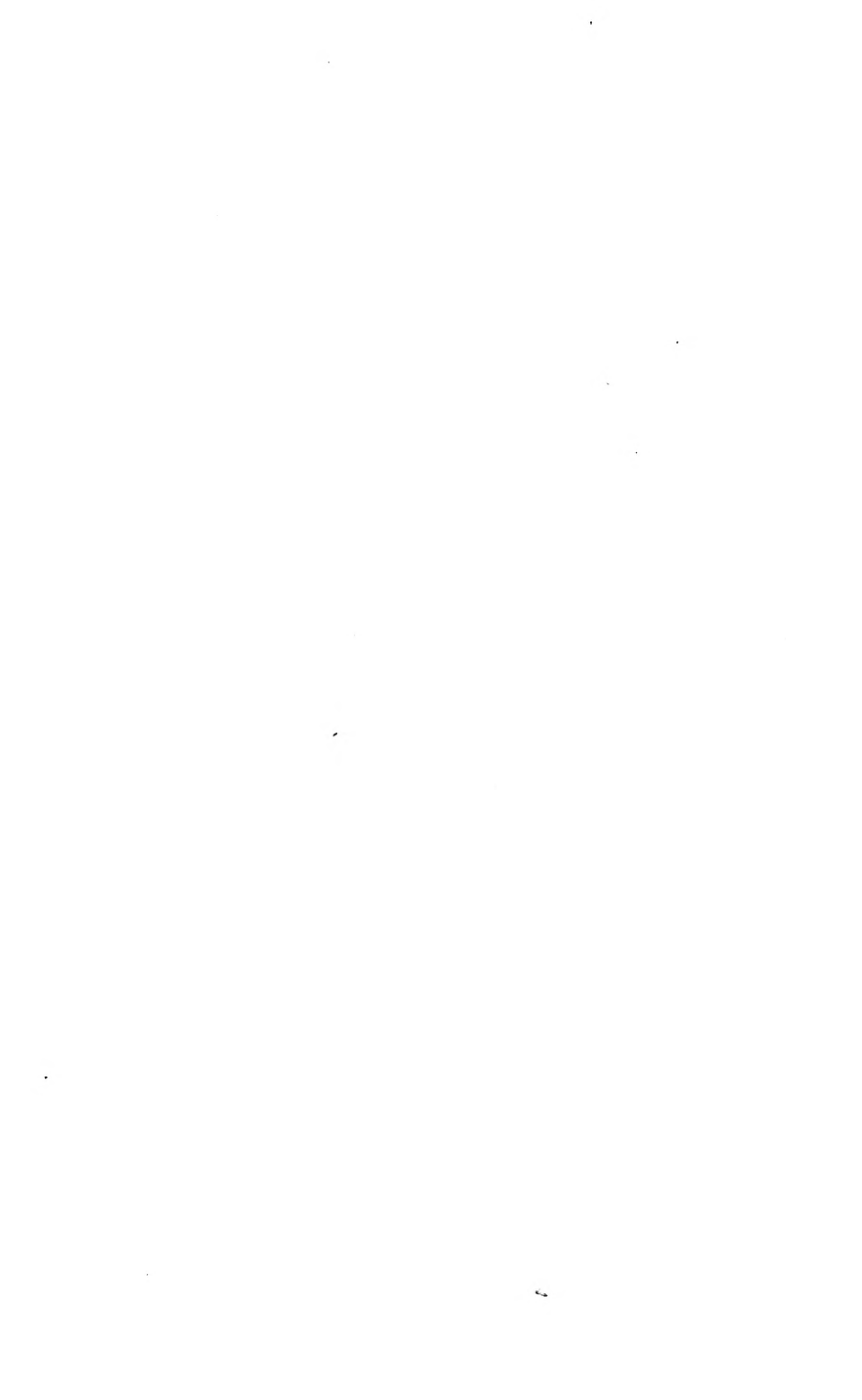
† See a sermon by St. Bernard (*In Nativ. SS. Innocent.*, c. 1): Et vidit ergo Johannes calicem salutatis, et secutus est Dominum, sicut Petrus, etsi non omni modo sicut Petrus. Quod enim sic mansit ut non *eterna* passione corporea Dominum sequeretur, divinam fecit consilii; sicut ipse ait, Sic cum volo manere, donec veniam. Ac si dicat: Vult quidem et ipse sequi, sed ego sic cum volo manere.

the words conveyed no such meaning, and that only through an inaccurate report of them, or a laying upon them of a meaning far greater than they themselves would justify, could they be made to convey any such impression: "*Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die, but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?*" Yet this explicit declaration that no such meaning lay in the words, was not sufficient to extinguish altogether such a belief or superstition in the Church. We find many traces of it at many times; even his death and burial, which men were compelled to acknowledge, were not sufficient to abolish it. For his death, men said, was not really death, but only the appearance of death, and he yet breathed in his grave; so that even an Augustine was unable wholly to resist the reports which had reached him, that the earth yet heaved over the apostle's grave, and the dust was lightly stirred by the regular pulses of his breath.\* The fable of his still living Augustine at once rejects, but is more patient with this report than one would have looked for, counting it possible that a permanent miracle might there be finding place.†

\* *In Ev. Joh., Tract. 124*: Cùm mortuus putaretur, sepultum fuisse dormientem, et donec Christus veniat sic manere, suamque vitam scaturigine pulveris indicare: qui pulvis creditur, ut ab imo ad superficiem tumuli ascendat, flatu quiescentis impelli. Huic opinioni supervacaneum existimo reluctari. Viderint enim qui locum sciunt, utrùm hoc ibi faciat vel patiat terra, quod dicitur; quia et reverà non à levibus hominibus id audivimus.

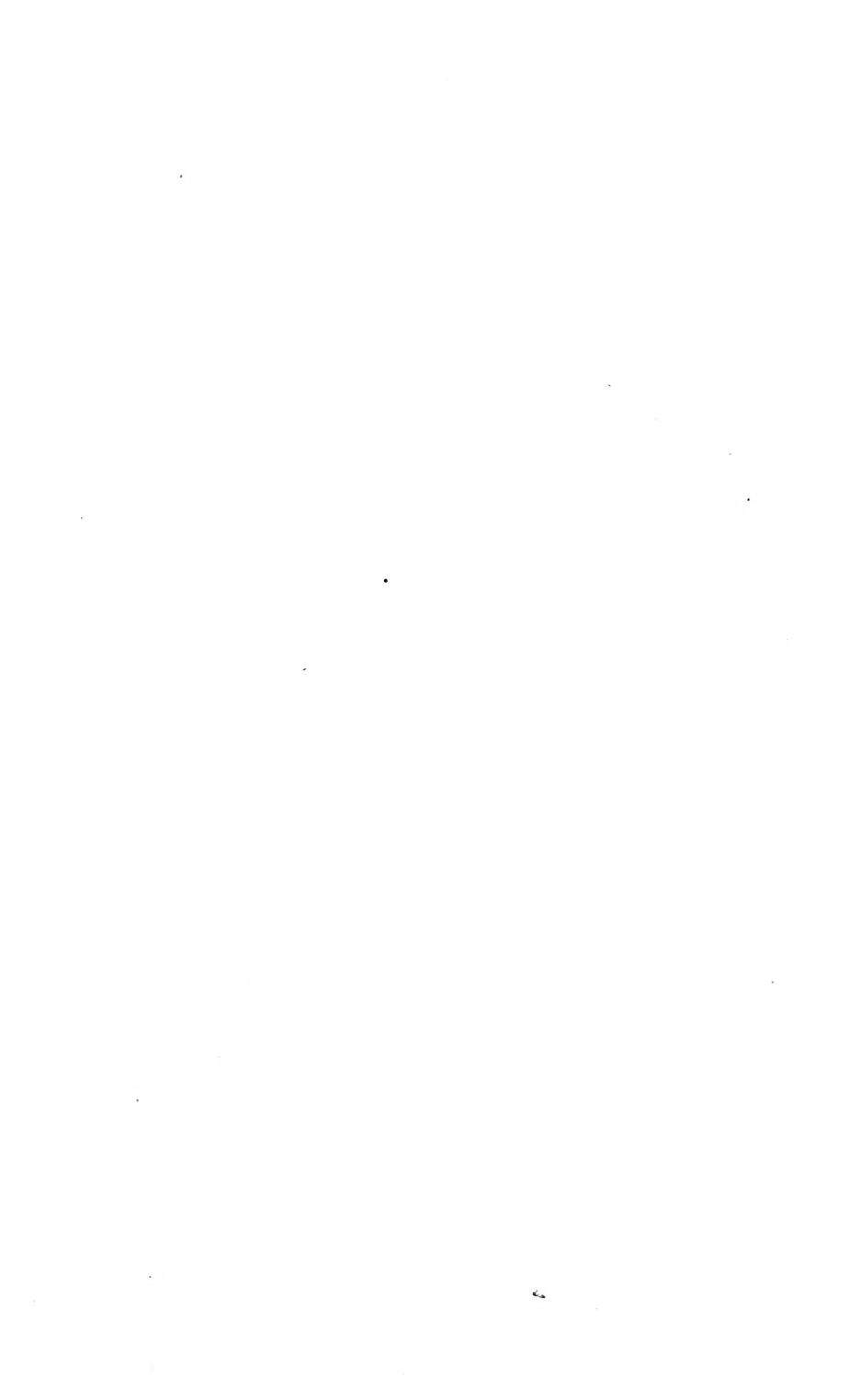
† See TERTULLIAN, *De Animâ*, c. 50; HILARY, *De Triuit.*, l. 6, c. 39; AMBROSE, *Exp. in Ps. cxviii. Serm. 18*, c. 12; JEROME, *Adv. Jovin.* l. 1, c. 26; NEANDER'S *Kirch Gesch.* v. 5, p. 1117. This superstition aided much the wide-spread faith of the middle ages, in the existence of Prester John in further Asia. Even as late as the sixteenth century an impostor was burnt at Toulouse, who gave himself out as St. John; and in England some of the fanatical sects of the Commonwealth were looking for his return to revive and reform the Church.—The erroneous reading *Sic* [for *Sî*] *eum volo manere*, which early found its way into the Latin copies, and which the Vulgate, with the obstinate persistence of the Romish Church in a once admitted error, still retains, must have helped on the mistake concerning the meaning of Christ's words.























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